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SOUTHLAND STORIES

JAMES B. HODGKIN

THE JOURNAL PRESS,

MANASSAS, VA.



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SOUTHLAND STORIES

BY
JAMES B. HODGKIN

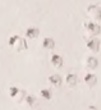
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TO
MY CHILDREN,
FOR WHOSE ENTERTAINMENT MOST OF THESE
STORIES WERE WRITTEN; AND TO
THE MEMORY OF THE
"OLD VIRGINIA,"
NOW BECOME ONLY A LEGEND IN HISTORY,
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

As "The Randolphs," "Chief," "Sam" and the others of the coterie pass out of my hands and into the world of letters, to be swallowed up in the whirling, surging crowd of "short stories," I feel a natural concern for them, knowing, possibly better than the reader, their weaknesses. I only wish to ask the reader to remember that I am not a professional story-writer, and that these sketches of mine have been written amidst the taxation of a toilsome professional career, often penned when too ill to work.

It is not likely that the average reader comprehends, or indeed can comprehend, how absolutely real to him the creations of a writer become. To-day I can shut my eyes and see "Chief," with tall hat and banded insignia of his office as hotel-porter, and hear his gruff voice; Julia Randolph's hair is even now falling down; Sam is grinning sheepishly, while John Temple is carrying his half-fainting sweetheart in his arms; Nedmonds's friend is sitting by the camp-fire, telling his story over again, and the deep, musical voice of "The General" sounds sweetly on the night air—would we could hear it still—and the faithful wife is standing outside the cave-door, with the blue-eyed girl by her and the baby boy in her arms;

PREFACE.

while Jack and Nan, under the star-lit sky are wondering over the foundling babe.

They pass and come again—they fade like the aurora borealis, and I am all alone ! Very real, very dear are ye, children of my fancy. May at least one lesson be learned of you by those who chance to read. Truth, faith, honor, a firm belief in the nobility of a simple, pure life.

Hero-worship? Well, yes. Next to God-worship I hold it is the most ennobling. When the South forgets her heroes, then indeed will her degradation have come; and every man who fought was, at least to his wife and children, a hero, worthy of worship; every woman who suffered and prayed, should be worshipped by all true men. I, for one, have taught my children that their most priceless heritage is that they have lived in a day when true heroism was at least still told as the one thing worth inheriting, most worshipful ! It is to record what I feel to have been the best and purest acts of those who fought and suffered—and may I add the best and purest men and women the world has produced, that I have written these stories. Many of them lived, the prototypes all existed, and I feel sure that our Southern people at least will recognize characters they knew and loved.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE RANDOLPHS.

THE Randolph mansion was much like a hundred other old houses in the Piedmont region of Virginia. Back of it towered the Blue Ridge, in front rolling slopes and foothills in descending terraces, a receding vista of plantation and forest, with mountain streams trickling down to join other mountain streams and these in inosculate embrace joining still others, until at last a great river far away rolls down to meet the ascending arm of the sea, an arm reaching out of the broad Atlantic, where salt and fresh water meet in the low, sandy tide-water region.

In the foreground are seen a lawn with native trees, and here and there a green-leaved, white-blossomed, perfume-scattering magnolia grandiflora. At the bottom of the lawn was a small running stream, beyond this a flower garden, with prim rows of evergreen box-wood, and an arbor of Virginia creeper and trumpet vine, and still beyond a vegetable garden, and then spreading out almost as far as the eye reached fields of corn, wheat and patches of tobacco, while towards the house ran a long lane of

cedars, marking the carriage-road leading to "Briarwood."

The porch in front of the mansion is much like many seen in Virginia—wide-floored, with columns reaching from floor to roof, giving an air of strength and solidity. The prospect from this point of view widened to many miles. Sitting there in the shade is a gentleman of fifty years, beside him a matron perhaps ten years younger. He, as he rises and stands erect, looking down the lawn, is fully six feet, strong and firm-looking on his feet, with iron gray hair and short moustache, a keen but kindly eye, and complexion much bronzed by exposure, but naturally dark.

The lady is just the opposite in make-up, with blue eyes, fair hair, a little too stout for gracefulness, and with that subdued, patient, slightly worn expression so frequently seen on the faces of Virginia matrons of her day—marks made by many slight and greater cares—of husband, children, servants, to say nothing of the hosts of visitors at Briarwood.

Running up the winding path, leading from the garden, come two boys in their "teens"; one, the younger, the image of his mother; the other as like his father; both laughing, screaming, shouting; and behind them a girl, she still younger than they, wondrously like her father, with a wealth of long, dark hair, streaming be-

low her waist, and with big blue eyes, in hue like the violets blooming down by the stream at the foot of the lawn. Of dark complexion she, but not too dark to light up with color when occasion comes. Behind these, Sam, black of skin, with shining teeth, grinning broadly, and slapping vigorously at some insect enemies swarming about his woolly head.

A foot catches in a creeping briar vine and headlong falls Julia in the grass, roaring with fright and pain, to be set on foot by Sam, her brothers rallying gallantly to her aid now that they see she is in trouble of their making.

“Dem boys is jes’ too mischev’s fer ter live. De done stir up de was’s nes’, en red was’s is jes natchel pizen fighters—wuss’n yaller jackets; en Miss Jule, she did’n run quick ’nuf, en she git stung, sho.”

Thus Sam, while Julia’s mother takes her in her arms, albeit a rather big armful, and soothes her sorrows, while Billy, the fair-haired, makes a mud poultice, famous always for allaying the pain of wasp-stings.

Enters on the stage the last of the *dramatis personæ*: A tall young man, rather pale and somewhat thin, with a quick gray eye, a firm, decided mouth, thin lips, ready for a smile that does not just come, and a strong, character-making nose.

“Time for lessons, Miss Julia, Master Dave,

Master Billy," so spoke Mr. Archie, the teacher, and all four disappear in a building called an office, set in one corner of the lawn—called office, because Mr. Randolph, in his younger days was supposed to have used it when he practiced law—now used by Mr. Archie (Henry Wayte Archie, he used to sign himself in making out reports and papers) as a school room.

Mr. Archie was from Maryland, away up in that part of the state where the Blue Ridge towers high and where the Potomac begins to trickle out of the gorges, and meeting other trickling streams, flows past little towns and hamlets to be swallowed up at last by the tide-water, meantime gathering affluents from other mountain streams. He hadn't the Virginia speech, so said Sam, but said "card," instead of "cayard," as was the pronunciation in the Briarwood country. But for all that he was a perfect gentleman, so Mrs. Randolph said, accomplished, and a first-rate teacher; and if Dave and Billy and Julia did not learn it was not for lack of skill or knowledge in the teacher. He was a rather quiet, undemonstrative gentleman, holding much the same political ideas as Mr. Randolph, and sometimes on the porch after dinner he would talk political science in a way that quite astonished the latter.

He intended studying medicine, he said, and made no secret of the fact that he was teaching

only to get a little ahead financially. He had had but little aid in his early education—he rather hinted than said this—but the boys and Julia looked on him as possessing the wisdom of the ages, excepting of course, their father. Mr. Archie never talked about his family, or home, and in this he was unlike the average young man, that is if such have any family to talk about; and one day a drover, picking up cattle in the neighborhood, professed to know that Mr. Archie's father was a wretched old drunkard, sick in a hospital in Baltimore, and that his son sent his earnings from time to time to keep the old man out of the charity ward.

Mr. Randolph heard all this at the post office, second-hand, and sternly rebuked the news-monger, one of the "poor white trash" of the neighborhood.

"How dare you, Sir! slander a gentleman. You know nothing whatever of this young man, and you come here mouthing somebody else's lies! Shut up. Many a man's been horse-whipped for less than you have said."

Of all this Mr. Archie heard nothing, and he would needs be a brave man to repeat such gossip to him; but went on teaching the boys and girls as efficiently as ever.

The home-teacher was a well known and important character in Virginia, many a lad and girl obtaining about all the education they pos-

sessed in this way, and in any event laying the foundation for a university training.

School opens and Mr. Archie took up algebra. Dave said he could do it with his eyes shut. Billy thought it was a little tough, but he made a fairly good record. To Julia it was as unmeaning as an Egyptian hieroglyph or an Aztec inscription. She just couldn't!

Reading next. Dave saw no sense whatever in the passage. Billy thought it might be sensible, but it was not practical. Julia was at home now.

"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts." And she, who had never seen a play in her life, sprang to her feet, her great wealth of hair falling about her waist, and then crouched low in the corner and wrung her hands as wildly and much more naturally than most stage Ophelias, sobbing and moaning out:

"He'll never come back again."

Then, springing to her feet, she seized Billy around the neck and sobbed on his breast as if—

"He's gone; he's gone," sure enough; while Billy, shaking her off, exclaims:

"Jule, I believe you have gone crazy! Just look at my necktie!"

The color comes in Mr. Archie's pale face.

"You've not seen plays, you say, Miss Julia?"

"No, sir. I saw a crazy girl once when they were taking her to the asylum, and I've seen a funeral, and I have played crazy just for fun."

Mr. Archie's fine eyes shone with admiration. "A great gift, Miss Julia, a rare gift. I am much astonished at it!"

"Then one day Mr. Archie read for them, or recited, after trying very hard to get Billy to say the lines in a somewhat different style from calling his dogs—the lines that have been the ambition and the despair of many a student of the great bard—

"To be, or not to be."

And as Mr. Archie stood in the corner of the room, he looked as if he saw no one, saw no room even, was looking into futurity, and seeing things yet to come. His tall form dilated, his fine eyes flashed, and as he spoke of taking "up arms against a sea of trouble," after suffering "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," Julia sat with wide eyes and open mouth—breathless. Then, when he drew an imaginary dagger from his breast and "threatened to make a quietus with a bare bodkin," she shrieked aloud and covered her face with her hands.

Billy said he looked as if he might cut himself sure enough, and Sam, who had come in with a fresh bucket of water from the spring, actually declared that he saw the blood. Julia

said that she was so scared she nearly had a fit.

All of which home events, carried forward by vernal and autumnal equinoxes, and summer and winter solstices, bring around a time when Julia has her wealth of hair tucked up in imitation of her mother's, and her skirts have suddenly grown from knee to ankle, and she stood forth in the framework of life's events, a very glorious picture of sixteenly beauty, than which no fairer sight is vouchsafed to us coarse, mortal men. And Mr. Archie took in the picture, with all its latent wealth of beauty and loveliness, and womanliness—took it all in just as if it might, some day, belong to him. Surely, it must belong to somebody soon—it was too rare a thing to go unclaimed of an owner. And from a longing for the picture, he began to think of the possibility of some day owning it.

No little courage, Mr. Archie, for this. The Randolphs are the proudest of the proud, descended from the aristocracy of old England, and as exclusive as a walled city. But courage! Mr. Archie, for walled cities have gates which sometimes open, or can be scaled, or dug beneath, and are they not unlocked sometimes with a golden key? Only Mr. Archie had no key of gold, nor likely soon to own one; nor, indeed, would it be likely that the Randolphs' fortress would open to such; for they had never really cared for money, were not at all rich;

and, indeed, the plantation in those days hardly made a living for all. Many of the slaves were old and decrepit and had to be taken care of, and no Randolph had ever been known to sell one.

And now the boys had to be sent away to school, and Julia to Mrs. Bagby's celebrated academy in Fredericksburg for the finishing touches, without which no Virginia young lady was supposed to be educated and accomplished.

No, Mr. Archie had no gold key, and he would be lucky if he made enough teaching to get him through the medical college, but he intended to master that profession if he had to scrub for it.

So he braced up like a man, and seeing no immediate way of prospectively possessing this fair goddess, he was fain to be content with worshipping it afar off, he, meantime, being near the end of his last school term.

* * * * *

This is the Randolph carriage at the door. It is Sunday, and the family are faithful church-folk. In the carriage are Mr. and Mrs. Randolph, Julia and Billy. The latter is no sooner seated than he scrambles over Julia's feet, to the great indignation of that young lady, to clamber up into a sulky driven by Mr. Archie, while Dave, with a brand new saddle and bridle, is riding in a very resolute manner a

colt that is resolutely determined not to be ridden.

All at church, and Mr. Ridout, the rector, is not there, having sent a note by a servant that a parishioner in the upper part of the county is dead, and he has to attend the funeral. Mr. Randolph, senior, reads the service, very gravely and reverently, being a lay reader, regularly appointed by the Bishop of Virginia. Julia plays the organ and sings very beautifully, to the great admiration of Mr. Archie, who joins her with a very good tenor voice to a tune they had practiced at home, and to the great envy of Mr. Jack Coleman, who can not sing, but who can and *does* worship Julia all unseen from his place in the gallery, until he gets courage to move to the front seat; and just once, possibly twice, Julia lifts those wonderful violet eyes of hers gallery-ward, long enough for Mr. Jack to be electrified from crown to toe, and in the enjoyment of which music and eyes he would gladly have set with his feet in the stocks and thought it joy and gladness. Meantime he is casting triumphant glances at Mr. Mason Nelson, who has ridden twelve miles over the mountain to attend the worship—of Miss Randolph !

And now the service is over, very orderly and reverent it all is, each worshipping after his fashion; Julia worship by at least a half

dozen of the young gentlemen of the neighborhood, and the Randolph carriage goes home with its occupants. Mr. Randolph is on the box with black Peter, the driver, and inside a young lady, a cousin of Julia's, who is to make a visit of uncertain duration to Briarwood. Visits in those days were like the coming and going of comets—difficult to calculate as to period.

On their return Mr. Jack Coleman rode his horse on one side of the carriage and scraped his toes dreadfully against the wheel, trying his best to get closer than Mr. Nelson Mason on the other, and Mr. Nelson Mason came near getting black Peter's whip-lash in his eye. Julia made eyes at both very shyly, when her mother was not looking, and these young gentlemen fought duels with their eyes across the space between them, and little Lucy Locke wondered mentally why those boys wanted to talk so much to Julia and not to her! Is not all this written in the chronicles of the Randolph family? Or if not, it will not be now.

And who could tell of the conferences between Julia and her cousin in the depths of the night, when tired people sleep and young girls grow confidential? Of all this no record is kept, for although the moon has a face it has no ears, and so can not listen.

And when Julia's maid brought in the fresh

spring water—a big bucketful—on her head, and put it down by the washstand, she had in her fingers a slip of a note addressed to “Julia,” written with great labor by Mr. Nelson Mason, over which the wicked Julia and Miss Locke laughed. Julia slipped the note into her bosom, to take it out at breakfast when Mr. Nelson was handing her the cream. He knew it was his because he recognized the perfume of the paper he had used. Then, cruel Julia tore it into little scraps, right before his face, saying in the most demure way—incorrigible Julia—that she must write to Mrs. Locke that very day and answer her letter. Meantime Mr. Mason has scalded his mouth with hot coffee and takes a certain interest in Billy’s setter dog, which sat by longingly asking for bones, with eyes as soft as even Julia’s.

The Sunday dinner being a thing of the past, Mr. Randolph blew a key-bugle, at the sound of which summoning call troops of blacks gathered around the porch, to whom, or with whom Mr. Randolph reads the evening service, and all sang, not only the set pieces of the church, but hymns as well, singing as only the blacks could. After which Mr. Randolph reads a sermon out of Thornton’s Family Prayer, and so the end, so far as his conduct of the service, for black Peter steps to the front and his big voice takes up the “Te Deum Lauda-

mus." Such rolling music from nearly a hundred throats, in exact time, as only natural musicians can! Then the oldest of all old hymns—the "Gloria in Excelsis," and the final—"for thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord"—the great chorus swelling and pealing upwards, far towards heaven, it is hoped.

Mr. Randolph spoke and thanked them for the singing and hoped that they would remember the sermon.

* * * * *

So Dick must get him a razor, and begin that labor of shaving which, when begun, ends not on earth, save with a full beard, never seen in the Randolph family, war-time only excepted. And Sam brings sundry jugs of hot water, and Dave's face is greatly lathered, and Billy lugs in an old cat with a suggestion that her rough tongue might take the place of the razor; whereat Dave drops his brush and rushes at Billy and both fall on the bed, Billy's face coming in for a good share of the lather, and to the detriment of the feline, she being between the combatants, gets, as is usual in such cases, the roughest of the fight.

But very soon Billy has a razor, and is in turn teased by Dave, who is making a race with the latter for the possession of a moustache, which, like most inheritances of minors is, so to speak, in reversion.

Julia made sport of both cultures, and told an exceedingly ancient story of the young man who asked his girl if she did not think his moustache was becoming, and who got for a reply, that it might be coming but had not yet arrived.

Mr. Archie did not grow a moustache. Billy said he could grow a heavy beard if he chose. Dave had an idea that it might be red, and so Mr. Archie kept it in retirement; whereat Julia waxed fierce and nearly came to blows with Dave, she declaring that the poorest thing that Mr. Archie had was superior to Dave's best, except, the Randolph name—that was, of course, better than all the Colemans and the Lees, and the Gordons and the whole tribe of cousins of the Randolph family far and near, of high and low degree; and then she whispered in Miss Locke's ear that she thought that Archie was too pretty a name for anything!

Meantime Miss Julia, the artful, pondered all these things and many others in her little heart, and made eyes shyly at Messrs Coleman, Mason, Archie and others, and kept all these strings to her bow, twanging each one at a time or all together, just like any other young lady with big violet eyes and beautiful hair would have done, and have done, I suppose, in all days.

And no doubt if Miss Eve had had half a dozen Adams to choose from instead of one

single Adam, she would have kept them dancing to a very anxious tune for some time; nay, possibly setting them to fighting about her. It is the way of the sex, you know.

* * * * *

Harvest at Briarwood and the wheat stacked. The great thrashing machine is running and Mr. Randolph is looking to see if all is in order, when crash went a nail through the cylinder and a bit of splinter lodges in Mr. Randolph's eye. He tied his handkerchief over the wound and said it was nothing, but the blood trickled down on his cheek and Sam ran to the house to tell. Mrs. Randolph came very quickly, and much against his will Mr. Randolph was forced to go in and have his eye inspected by Mr. Archie, who had been reading medicine and was looked upon by the family as quite an authority. He told Mrs. Randolph and Julia they had better help him, one by getting a bottle of lotion on the bureau from his room, and the other by bringing some hot water; but as soon as the door was closed behind them he quietly but firmly told Mr. Randolph that all the lotions in the drug store could not help the eye, as the splinter had gone right through the ball. Whereat Mr. Randolph said "thank you, sir," as politely as though he had done him a favor.

But it was much worse than even Mr. Archie

thought, for so great was the injury that Mr. Archie said they had best get the doctor right away. When he came, he shook his head and said he feared the nerve was injured and that both eyes might go, the sound one from sympathetic irritation. And that same day went a swift messenger to the railroad station and a telegraph message to Richmond, and two days later a handsome young gentleman stepped off the train and took a carriage which was waiting to carry him to Briarwood.

This was a young surgeon, but wonderfully skillful, who had already a name over half the professional country, and was, as stated above, as handsome as could be.

Dr. Retinus was taken in, after an introduction to the ladies, to see Mr. Randolph and consult with old doctor Pettus, the family physician, and over the case they talked long and earnestly, and thence to the dining room to lunch. But while at this Dr. Pettus told Mrs. Randolph as gently as he could that an operation was an immediate necessity in order to save the other eye, which was becoming rapidly involved. Otherwise Mr. Randolph would lose both eyes.

In the operation Dr. Retinus met but one difficulty which had not occurred before in his practice. Mr. Randolph *would not* take an anæsthetic. The doctor told him that such an

operation—the removal of the entire eye—was of all things the most delicate, and it was absolutely necessary that the patient be absolutely quiet. But Mr. Randolph thought he would not move, called Sam to lift the lounge to the window and laid himself down on it as quietly as though he was going to be shaved, much to the wonder of the great surgeon, but not so greatly to the wonder of old Dr. Pettus, who had long known of what stuff the Randolphs were made. For had not Mr. Randolph, when the new well was being dug, and the sides caved in, burying poor Tim Lockett under piles of rocks and lumber, seized the rope and slid quickly down, so swiftly as to tear the skin from his palms, and stood there lifting the rocks from the half-buried man, piling them in the bucket, calling on the men above to hoist away, and ended by tying Lockett to the rope and having him pulled to the surface, half dead, and last of all being hoisted himself just as the caving in began afresh? And Tim Lockett was nothing but a “po’ free nigger, either,” said Sam, and did not even belong on the place.

The young surgeon staid a day or so, just to see that the case was on the right road, which it soon was; for, as Dr. Pettus said, the Randolphs were made of such fine stuff that they almost got well of themselves. Meantime Miss Julia kept out of sight, as much as she could, and

did not even make eyes at the doctor, only being revealed to him as a vision of rare beauty with violet eyes, as she came out of her father's room in the very early morning, with her wealth of hair down to the waist, and her shoes unfastened, having been in to carry him a cool drink. She had no idea that Dr. Retinus was up, and scurried away as fast as her little feet would carry her, actually slamming her room door, and said "impudent, to catch me that way. How was I to know that he was up at that time of the morning," she said, talking it over with Miss Locke. And here was another gross idolater, bowing to an idol, not of wood or stone, but a most wonderful revelation in flesh and blood, worshipped in all ages and in all countries; and but for the fact that Dr. Retinus had a sweetheart already in Richmond, no one will ever know to what extent he might have neglected his practice in that fair city; and even as it was he professed to see a cloud on the corner of Mr. Randolph's other eye, and thought it was as well to add a day or so to his stay at Briarwood, meantime forgetting altogether the commandment "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and went on worshipping two fair goddesses at once.

Mr. Randolph fully recovers, and in due time makes a visit to Richmond, pays Dr. Retinus his fee, and comes back with a glass eye, so

wonderfully constructed and cunningly inserted that Sam declared he could see through the horses' ribs and tell if they had been fed.

* * * * *

Mr. Tom Pendleton from Accomac, across the Chesapeake, and a far away cousin, came on a visit to Briarwood. He looked down on Mr. Archie quite disdainfully, or thought he did, though Sam said that Mr. Archie had "mo' sense in he leetle finger den Mr. Tom Pendleton had in his whole haid"; and so one fatal morning Mr. Tom precipitated a crisis by getting drunk and insulting Mr. Archie, styling him a poor white Yankee, who had to teach school for a living, and whose father never owned a nigger in his life. Whereat Mr. Archie, having first escorted Mrs. Randolph and Miss Julia inside, very promptly knocked Mr. Pendleton off the porch.

It is said that fortune favors the brave, and although possibly it might have been braver for Mr. Archie to have left Mr. Tom Pendleton on his very unsteady legs, yet he scored one with Billy, who applauded greatly and said he served him exactly right, and he was only sorry he did not hit him harder. For Billy was just wrapped up in Mr. Archie, as is every boy over whom his teacher has real influence. Dave was a little inclined to be of the opinion, partly possibly for the sake of being on opposite sides

from Billy, that, no matter what might have been the provocation, the fact that Mr. Archie was "on a salary" made him—well, not exactly an equal socially.

And Mr. and Mrs. Randolph worried no little about it, and wished greatly that Mr. Pendleton had put off his visit until Mr. Archie had left, which would have been in a few weeks at most.

Meantime Mr. Archie went to his room and was putting his things together, and called Julia's maid and asked to see Mr. and Mrs. Randolph, to whom he made a very short little speech, indeed, simply asking if Sam could take him to the stage road that night, as he was going away. Mr. Randolph asked him very kindly and courteously if he had not better remain until his term was out, and Mrs. Randolph begged him to overlook poor foolish Tom Pendleton's doings, and wouldn't he stay? But when she saw that look about Mr. Archie's mouth, she gave it up, for she had seen that expression on the Randolph face more than once—it was a sign hung out for all to read—it meant no!

Mr. Tom took himself off to the stable and told Sam, and nursed his skinned elbow and swore about it not a little, and Sam hitched up the buggy with very reluctant fingers, for he just doted on Mr. Archie, and held Mr. Pendleton in profound contempt.

Julia's maid had told her all about the case (Julia had of course heard the insulting words) and laughed over the way Mr. Tom fished himself out of the honeysuckle vine, and said his "breaif smelt jes' awful wi' dat cheap sto' whiskey," and Julia felt as though she would like greatly to be a Miranda to a certain Ferdinand, and tumbled all over the bed in her distress at Mr. Archie's going—"just as I was learning a little of that horrid algebra, too, and he was showing me how to do Beatrice like he had seen it." And she rushed down stairs to her mother's sitting room ready to pull Mr. Tom's hair as savagely as a robust girl of sixteen was able.

But her mother was not there, and she almost fell into the arms of a certain gentleman, pale, tall, dignified, and whose voice shook a little:

"Miss Julia, I suppose you are aware that I leave to-night?"

Julia was not aware of it—so she stoutly declared. She probably knew her maid well enough to be aware that she fibbed sometimes, and then—well, people do not believe things they do not want to any way—that is an everyday thing. But she was so excited and worried that she forgot her hair, which hung down just like it did when she read Ophelia. Mischievous Julia! Do you know just how fascinating and altogether worshipful you are with your hair

down in that way? And are you really and truly setting your cap for Mr. Archie with those violet eyes?

Mr. Archie's stern mouth relaxed. "I see no other way," he replied. "It is very sad, and troubles me greatly, but I can not see how to continue my teaching with this state of things on hand. I fear my work at Briarwood is ended."

"Would you stay if I sent cousin Pendleton away?" Julia had no doubt of her ability to do that.

"No, Miss; I can not see how that would help matters; besides he is a guest of the family, and I—am only a poor teacher." And Mr. Archie tried to swallow a lump in his throat that would not stay down, but kept rising up.

Julia was looking at a picture on the wall. It was that of a gay cavalier of the olden time, with his arm around a slender lady's slender waist.

She turned those wonderful violet eyes askance on him. (Sam said he believed she could see behind her.) Wonderful, swimming eyes! Wicked Julia! Then she looked at the toe of her shoe and said to it:

"Would you—would you—stay—if *I* asked you to?"

O, Julia, Julia! Dropping matches, lighted matches, in shavings and straw and such com-

bustibles! Did you really think that they would not catch and blaze and burn at a white heat? No, I dare say, not. But who of the feminine sex, with long, black hair and violet eyes, and all the glory of blossoming sixteen—who would not have tried the matches just a little?

Behold now Mr. Archie worshipping his idol—an idol that had just spoken and by inference asking the adoration and the falling down to. He made his first love speech, entirely impromptu, very brief, and to the point. No record of it made in the Randolph archives.

And Julia was frightened beyond all words at the blaze the one little match made, and tried to put it out, and burnt her fingers in so trying.

And the picture on the wall of the slender-waisted lady and the gay cavalier looked down on a picture in the middle of the room very like it, when——

“Well, upon my word, young man!” And Mr. Randolph, senior, enters the room, grim of face and decidedly sarcastic in tone. Whereupon, at the special emphasis on the syllable “word,” Julia took flight in a very cowardly and base desertion of Ferdinand, leaving Prospero to deal with him as an angry Prospero might.

Both gentlemen were very dignified and po-

lite, and no one could have judged by their voices that a deadly duel of words was going on. The upshot of which duel was that Mr. Randolph hurts his wife's feelings dreadfully, and for the first time in his life, by telling her that she was entirely too careless with Julia, and ordering Sam to have the buggy ready for Mr. Archie when he called for it. And he sent the boys away with an enigmatical note to a neighbor, five miles away, with instructions to bring the answer, which note being very ambiguously worded, both boys and neighbor spent the evening over it, and the former concluded to stay all night and dream out the answer.

Meantime Mr. Archie packed up his little things, looking awfully glum and fierce, and when Mrs. Randolph, the good-hearted, rapped at his door, he was half a mind not to let her in. Then he changed his mind and did let her in, and sat on the bed and actually cried; and she said "poor fellow!" and tried to comfort him just as she had tried to comfort other people in other troubles, only not having the right sort of balm of Gilead, it smarted the sore and hurt it all the worse.

And is it you, wicked Julia, who, minus shoes, so that you could creep cat-like in your stockings—was it you that creaked the plank in the hall floor and set your little heart beating so?

Was it you who stood at the crack of the door and heard it all, and sniffled to yourself like a little repentant sinner, and when you heard a step inside ran to your room like a mouse with a cat after it, and fell down on the bed and cried and cried, and then got up and shut the door so your mother could not hear you, and thought of Julia with Romeo banished; and then taking a sudden thought arose as quick as a flash, dressed yourself, put up your glorious hair, tied on your walking shoes and met your innocent mother in the hall? She was going to see old Patty—poor old rheumatic, bed-ridden Patty. And what should she carry her? And Mrs. Randolph loaded a basket for Patty, and Julia called her maid and walked to Patty's and sat down on the style and waited.

Ah, Julia! when you dropped matches and kindled a fire of that sort, did you really start a duplicate fire in your own tender breast? Such fires spread rapidly and the brighter they burn the more they do burn. And is it you, oh Julia, blowing the sparks and watching it blaze? It looks so. For Mr. Archie, in the buggy with Sam, saw a fair vision on a style leading to Patty's manse, and told Sam—wicked Mr. Archie—you playing with the fire, too?—that he would like to walk a little, and Sam could drive on—he would overtake him at the ford.

And Julia and Mr. Archie walked up the road,

mighty slowly, she with her hand on his arm and the violet eyes doing their work. And Sam said, the next day, that 'he done missed de stage—him and Mr. Archie—dat she wuz full two hours ahead o' time by de moon, and Mr. Archie done took a trip t'wuds Warrenton erfoot, and tell him ter sont de trunk by the nex' stage.'"

But Sam did not tell that Mr. Archie and Miss Julia walked to the ford, and walked up and down in the path leading to the mill, and it grew so dark that Mr. Archie could not think of allowing Miss Julia to walk home by herself with only her maid, and how he stood at the garden gate like Maud's lover, and watched the lights in the house, and saw his Maud—that is—Julia, go in, and he shut out in the cold, cold world, and only that fire to warm him which came from that dreadfully carelessly dropped match of Julia's.

I, the chronicler, might have, if I had the fine fancy, made a beautiful picture of all this, and possibly of Mr. Tom Pendleton challenging Mr. Archie, or even Mr. Randolph, senior, threatening him with a horse whip, but as none of these things happened, and as what I tell did, the truth must prevail and the record stand. It is best to tell the plain truth even about Julia Randolph.

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Our Julia is again in Fredericksburg, at Mrs. Bagby's school for young ladies, and her mother goes with her and returns to Briarwood with a new set of false teeth, made by the renowned Dr. Forceps, which she could not wear except in company, and which she carried conveniently in her key-basket until they got broken; and Julia had two teeth filled by the same celebrated doctor, to her great pain. And Billy goes to the University to study law, and Dave passes an examination which admits him to West Point.

And one fine day Julia put a little letter in the post office at Fredericksburg in direct violation of Mrs. Bagby's school regulations. It was addressed to the care of the dean of the medical college in the city of Baltimore, and not a single girl in Mrs. Bagby's school, if they had known of it, would have ever told Mrs. Bagby a thing; and, indeed, I hardly think Julia told any girl about it; for the matter was growing serious, this fire-flame, and like a deadly disease, the more serious, the more closely hidden. And in due time an answer came back, directed—oh, heartless Julia! to “Miss Julia Atwater, General Delivery, Fredericksburg, Va.” And Miss Julia Randolph acted the part of Miss Atwater charmingly, only she forgot when the postmaster asked what name, and said: “Julia Randolph,” and then turned very red

and stammered—"I mean Atwater," whereat the postmaster laughed and said that it was no wonder young ladies forgot their names, seeing they kept them such a little while. And Julia ran off as fast as her little feet could carry her and sat down on a bench in the railroad station and read her letter, just like you or me, had we been Julia and had an Archie, would have done. For, big as the world is, the people in it act much alike under the same conditions.

* * * * *

And the wheels of time fly, and Dave has spent his required time at West Point and is appointed to a Lieutenancy in the United States Army, while meantime Billy gets his degree in law at the University, and Mr. Archie is the elated possessor of a diploma from a medical college entitling him to "practice medicine with all the rights, titles and privileges appertaining thereto." And just a little later he stood a successful examination for the position of surgeon in the army, and is *not* assigned to the same command as Dave's, as you expected me to say.

Now the rumblings of war are heard in the South and echoed in the North, the stern preparations by both are being made, and Mr. Randolph, senior, who has been representing his State in the Senate of the United States for the past four years resigns, and Virginia is medi-

tating secession, and so the face of history changes and clouds overcast the scene.

Will Dave come home? Will Lee resign? Will untold things happen? Will Mr.—Dr. Archie——? But Julia had come back long before this; and behold all the worshippers of this fair goddess had on gray suits and sat on horses, and wore sabres. As for Julia she was quite sure that every man in the regiment commanded by brother Billy was brave enough and strong enough to overcome a thousand, and that Billy was going to be the greatest soldier in the Confederate army: she meantime being, so far as looks went, fitter than ever to be set upon a pedestal and worshipped by the whole regiment.

Mrs. Randolph and Julia are sitting in their room talking, the gentlemen of the household being away of course. It is Julia who is speaking.

“Mother, dear—I—I think Mr. Archie has been gone now for three years.”

“Is it so long as that, Julia? How time does fly! I am getting so stout. Do you know, I declare, I got out one of my old waists the other day and it would not meet by ever-so-much.”

“Yes, I know, mother, dear—but you are always the same dearie, dearie, dearie old mother, arn’t you, now?”

This with sundry hugs and kisses.

"Oh, of course, Julia, but what on earth put you in mind of all that—I mean, what put Mr. Archie into your head?"

"Mother, dear"—the artful Julia—"do you think if I had happened to have met Mr. Archie at the White Sulphur last summer it would have been wicked?"

"Wicked! why, no, Julia, what put that question into your head? Mr. Archie was always a perfect gentleman, and I was always glad to have you and the boys under him."

"I did not say I did see him, did I, mother dearest?"

"Dearie mother"—sly Julia—your arm is around mother's neck and grows tighter still—at some mischief, Julia, as sure as fate—"I did see him there."

And Julia is smothering her mother with kisses. "Mother, dear, I was so sorry for poor Archie when he went away."

"So was I, my child, but I thought you had forgotten all about that. What made you think of it just now?"

"Because, mother, *dearie, dearie, dearie* mother, you don't seem to understand—I was so sorry for Mr. Archie, and I am so sorry for him now, and"—talking very fast, indeed, and holding very tight to her mother's neck—"I am afraid, mother, if I had not encouraged Mr.

Archie, he would not have felt it so—the going away.”

“Well, my dear, what has all this to do with Mr. Archie now?”

“Because, mother, dearie, Mr. Archie is coming on the next stage to see us,” with which iteration and many blushes, Julia darted out of her mother’s room and into hers, and straightway looks in the glass to see if her blushes are becoming, and decides that she has not lost a bit of her attractiveness—vain Julia!

Mr. Archie came. He asked for Mr. Randolph; he asked for the young gentlemen. Mr. Randolph was away in Richmond on important business of state. Mr. Billy and Mr. Dave had gone hunting away the other side of the mountain. Mr. Archie was sorry, though no very great grief was written on his brow. Mr. Archie was here, too, on important business and must go back on the next stage. Mrs. Randolph goes out to see about lunch. Julia steps out from behind the window curtain—Polonius was stabbed there, behind the arras—and so Julia, for the very first sound of Mr. Archie’s voice smote on her ears with a great singing noise so that her knees became weak and she had to hold by the casing of the window until the dizziness passed, and the fatal dart went right through her tender little heart, so that she had not the wit even to be coy, but

wept so for joy on Mr. Archie's bosom that she spoiled all of his white shirt front.

Mrs. Randolph came back, as far as the door, and saw the grand tableau; and it was the old picture on the wall, of the cavalier and the slender-waisted lady, but she did not say—"Upon my word, Sir!" In fact she slipped out as softly as she slipped in, before either of them noticed her, so much for felt slippers and considerate feelings.

But possibly she might have said, "Upon my word, Sir," but that a month before Mrs. Randolph had a long letter from her cousin, the Lieutenant-Governor of Maryland, saying that he had made the acquaintance of a Dr. Archie, a very talented young gentleman and bidding fair to be at the very front of the medical profession, and that finding he, the Lieutenant-Governor was related to the Randolphs, he had asked him to write to Mrs. Randolph and relate a few facts concerning the Archie family, their early history, ancestry, etc. And he had learned that the family was of very distinguished lineage, indeed, of Huguenot extraction, and had been driven out of France during that dreadful persecution, settled in Scotland, intermarried there with a Scotch family of noble descent, and that he had altogether a pedigree as long as the king's.

All of which information, Mrs. Randolph had

duly treasured up in her heart and sent to her husband, who was in Congress, and thought it best to say nothing to Julia about it, at least for the present.

For Mrs. Randolph had been over all that road herself years before, when she was young Julia, and she knew that Mr. Archie would come back just as all brave, true lovers do.

And Mr. Archie came, and went the same night; and Julia leaned over the balcony—I mean out of the window, and Romeo talked back at her from the buggy, not caring if Sam did hear, and told her she would catch her death of cold, until Sam actually drove him off in the midst of a sentence, for fear they would miss the stage. Meantime Julia came back into the light with something wonderfully bright flashing on her finger, a ring that had come down in the Archie family for no one could tell how many generations, a slender gold ring; and the diamond in it outshone even the famous eyes of the beautiful Julia.

But oh, what is this little casket, which Mr. Archie put in Julia's hand, as he came away? Something of which he said that it had been preserved in the family since their ancestors had fled from France, and that that and the ring was all that was left of a treasure almost of royal price. And now see the fair and vain Julia opening the box, and thinking of Portia's

casket; and, my ! the likes of which had never before dazzled the eyes of simple country Julia—a beautiful diamond cross, encrusted with rubies and pearls, and interwoven with tiny gold flowers—a wonder of art, indeed. Julia had never seen such before; but with feminine instinct she knew its use, and in a twinkling it was out of the box and the chain around her fair neck, with the cross on her fair bosom. And as she stood there with her long hair down to her waist, it was a sight for the moon only and Julia's maid, who danced about the room in an ecstasy, declaring that Miss Julia was 'jis' too lubly fer anything in de worl'," and wondering how the diamonds would look on her black neck.

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And now came trouble sure enough. Dave had written that he had decided to remain in the army, and not resign and come home, as so many were doing. He hoped the trouble would soon blow over, and even thought there would be no war. It was mostly brag and bluster he wrote, and he went so far as to say that if those wretched abolitionists and fire-eating South Carolinians could have a good thrashing it would end the whole business. And even while his letter was being read at home Lee had resigned, and the state of Virginia had passed an ordinance of secession.

Old Mr. Randolph came home a badly shattered man. He had fought against secession and clung to the Union; and now it seemed to him that his life had turned out a failure. His son Dave, whom he doted on, was in arms against his native state, a colonel of infantry, U. S. A.; and Billy, in all the glory of strong young manhood, was a colonel in the Virginia State troops. Billy rejoiced in it, as all strong and lusty young men do always, who snuff the battle from afar, and cried "Aha! Aha!" and have in all days.

It is in the blood—young blood—fiery blood, and no sort of reasoning takes it out. A strong man takes naturally to fighting, and I should be in some doubt of his manliness if he did not. And you—oh, Julia! you and the rest of you, you hark them on, you know it; and you know that no sight pleases you so much as a victory for your side, and you would feel mightily ashamed of brother or cousin or sweetheart who shows the white feather.

So there was war, about which this history is but slightly concerned, only caring for Dave, Billy, Mr. Archie, the poor old Senator and the ladies at Briarwood.

A few of the slaves drifted off at the beginning, but most of them remained, faithfully caring for the home people; and though careless and idle, were in the main trustworthy.

Mr. Randolph told them they had all better go, but they did not, and really food and clothing was a serious matter for so many. A Yankee camp near by was a real blessing, as they had eggs and poultry they could trade for groceries and even clothing for the blacks.

Evidently it was revealed to old Senator Randolph by the Divine Revealer of Secrets that he had about run his race in life. He scarcely realized that war was on and that the thirsty earth was drinking up the blood of thousands, or that the battle was fierce. He knew, as old people do, by a sort of intuition, that if he saw his boys again in the flesh it must be soon, and he asked piteously for them; and yet he had no wit to make plans for this—only a longing desire.

* * * * *

Now, Julia, gird up your loins like a true woman that you are, and do the impossible. Bring the recreant brother Dave, from the North, and the brave Col. Billy from the South, that the patriarch may see his sons once more in the flesh; and oh, Julia—whisper it to yourself! and to the faithful Sam; bring doctor surgeon Archie, too! Stranger things than this have happened, and are happening every day and hour, and why not this?

For had not Sam, the faithful, gone into the enemy's lines not once but many times, and

even carried a little note, written "in great haste," by one of the Briarwood folk, begging a certain surgeon to keep a lookout for the — Virginia boys, in case any were wounded, and to make such cases "special"; and if her dear brother Billy should be so unlucky as to be hurt *please* to take care of him for the sake of old memories (which, being interpreted, meant for the sake of Julia). And the note was signed by "A Virginia Girl," which girl seemed quite oblivious of the fact that the reference to her brother Billy revealed her identity very plainly, indeed.

And Julia, good, pious Julia, went to her room and sent up as fervent prayers as any saint or martyr ever offered, and having thus braced herself for the contest laid her plans like the fine feminine strategist that she was. For Julia is a Randolph, it must be remembered, and it is said that the blood of Pocahontas flows in her veins; and when the Randolphs set their heads and hearts about a task it must be difficult, indeed, if it fail of accomplishment.

And one day Billy, the Virginia Colonel, was greatly surprised at seeing a wagon marked U. S. A., C. D., which, being interpreted, meant United States Army, Commissary Department, break down this side of the river; and just at that moment there was a stir among the blue

coated pickets beyond, and a sudden move to the rear, and a wonderful amount of rifle-pit digging, and the wagon was left far outside of the Union lines. Sam, who seemed able to wander indiscriminately around, went over to the wagon and returning said that "de warn' nuttin' de marter wid it, sep' de lynchpin drapt out, en ef he could get er team he mout haul her right up to the house." And so he did, and there was enough provisions in the wagon to furnish the Randolph family, white and black, for many days. It was told in after years, the story, by Col. Dave, as a bit of military strategy not reported in the movements of the army of the Potomac.

Sam, one day not long after, took a basket with a few eggs and some other "ingrejients," as he called them, over into the Union lines. He said they "lef him in 'cause he was a counterband," and the eggs and other fixtures went to the tent of a certain surgeon who had a keen gray eye much like Mr. Archie, but a full beard of brownish hue, not like Mr. Archie's; and both eggs and note were duly confiscated by the surgeon and promptly devoured—the note first. And Sam brought back the basket filled with such things as the Randolphs had in ante-bellum days and had not then; and a note came back, too—not the one that Sam carried, but

one in a strong, manly hand, and what the note said is for you to guess.

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"Sam, where is your master Billy now?"

Thus Julia to Sam aforesaid.

"Seed er scout yistuddy, at de pos' offis, 'n he say Gin'l Stuart en Marse Billy, beggin' de gen'ls pardon, Marse Billy 'n Gin'l Stuart, de wuz at de cote house campin'. De picket line right on the river, en Marse Billy, he reeg'ment right on the picket line.

"How wide is the river, Sam?"

"Taint nothin' tall but a spring branch, just de haid water. Miss, you kin mos' step 'cross!

"My colt take me over, Sam?"

"Lor', Miss Julia, your colt, you ain't thinkin' 'bout—why, my Lawd, Miss, ain't I jes' tell you de Yankees right dar? How you gwine to cross de ribber?"

"Sam, do you know where the ninth corps is—you know what I mean?"

"Hayar dat same scout say de wuz facin' yeach oder—Marse Billy en Marse Dave."

"Sam, what time is it?"

"By de clock, fo' o'clock, by de sun, harf parst."

"Sam, feed and curry the colt and feed the mule. Have both at the rack at dark. I am going to see your Master Billy, and must go to-night. No; not a word; go!"

Sam went to the stable and curried the colt to the tune of—"De Marster done lose his min'—Marse Dave done lose his min'—en gone inter de Yankee ahmy; Miss Julia, she done start ravin' crazy, gwine to that camp; eider de's all crazy or les' hit's Sam. Mout be me, do, an' any way what Miss Julia say is de law and de testimony."

And at midnight Julia and the colt and Sam and the mule were stopped by the pickets of Stuart's cavalry, escorted to headquarters, where she had a short conference with that soldier, whom she had known before and of whose courtly qualities all the world has heard. She saw her brother Billy and had a conference with him; affectionate at first, stormy in the middle, quiet at the close; and now, behold Julia and Sam, under the escort of two troopers, approaching the dreaded Union lines, waving a bit of white handkerchief, tied to a switch—her own; because the general said there was not a bit of white about the camp that could be told as such—lack of soap and opportunity—he said.

Halt again. White flag waved; troopers advance. Col. Billy sits on his horse a little way off, at whom a Yankee pickett aims his rifle, sees white flag, brings rifle to a rest, looks at the woman and the colt—a remarkable handsome thing, the woman; a long tailed thing,

the colt. The line opens and Julia, the colt, Sam and the mule disappear.

Another tent close by; at a table sits a very perplexed and troubled looking officer. He has a map spread out before him, but he is miles and miles away from the map in spirit. He is preaching a sermon to himself and the text is, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world"—and lose the respect, and love and esteem of brother, and sister and father and mother, and neighbor and friend? And he had gotten just so far as to quote the words of poor old Woolsey: "I charge thee, Cromwell, fling away ambition."

"Why, Julia! What in the world!" Meantime Julia's arms were around the neck of the Colonel, and she was choking him as badly as she did Billy in the Ophelia scene, in the old school-room in the years long gone by.

Strange scene, indeed! To-morrow, the charge, the battle, the slaughter; to-night, the reunion of brother and sister, and in such strange fashion, indeed—in perils of night and of hostile troops.

But Julia's blood was up, and very rapidly she tells her story of the failing father, over which narration the strong man bows his head and groans—meantime Julia's hair falls down in a more cataract fashion than when she and Mr. Archie were in the room, and her father

had come in and said, "Upon my word, Sir!" Then here was still another battle—Dave just would not send for Archie, and Julia gave it up with him, but she had a dozen arrows in her quiver; for had not Sam come through the lines with her? And Sam had the programme and plan of battle or strategic moves—all explained by mental telegraphy—in which occult art both she and Sam were past-masters.

Now Colonel Dave writes a brief note to the General. It read:

"*Dear General*:—My sister has ridden through the lines at midnight to tell me that my father is dying and calls for me constantly, saying that he must see his boys. You know the country—you know my father's plantation—you have been his guest in happier days. Advise me."

And no more time than it took to ride across a field, the General stepped into Col. Randolph's tent and caught Julia sitting in the lap of that officer—her hair down, and her arms around his neck—in defiance of all military regulations. But he was as courteous to fair Julia as if she were Joan of Arc, and looked as if he would have liked to set his military cap at her then and there.

A ride to the picket line—more halting—Col. Billy sitting on his horse a little way off like a stone man on a stone horse, only he was smoking a pipe. See now, this Esau and Jacob

meet—falling on each other's necks and weeping.

Really, the first words Billy said was :

“Got a flask, Dave? It's deucedly cold out here.”

And Dave had the flask, and Billy took a good pull at it, too. Something the matter, for a horseman rides amain from the Union lines, as if to call them back. A tall man, pale where he was not brown from exposure, and with a full brown beard, and a surgeon's case of instruments strapped to his saddle.

Just in time, too; for as sure as parallax and other mathematical things, Julia has tumbled off the colt in a dead faint at the sight of the tall man. Very pat these things do turn out—the right man in the right place, and the right lady, too. Even she took, after good deal of persuasion, a little of the flask; and while the two Colonels were vainly trying to draw some information from each other as to how the lines lay, the wicked surgeon—for shame, Julia! was tasting to see if there was the odor of spirits on her lips.

* * * * *

A feeble old man was lying on a bed, the light of life was fading and only the past remained with him. He calls for his children—

“Billy, Dave, Julia—are they in the house? Are they out at play? Was Julia kept in

school? Tell Mr. Archie not to be hard on her. She never could understand figures. Had they their Christmas things? Tell the boys to be careful with their guns. They were so heedless."

Then the scene changed. He was in the Senate speaking, not words of burning eloquence, but very disjointed words, indeed. And then suddenly shifting—

"For better or worse, for richer or poorer, until death do us part." And a soft hand was slipped into his and a pair of tremulous lips—the tie was as yet unbroken.

Dogs bark; horses trample; voices call. See the procession!

Julia, flanked by Dave and Billy as good friends as though they were just coming out of the garden, fighting wasps; smoking as fast as they could. "No pipe like the old Powhattan," says Dave. "No tobacco like that grown at the back of the house," says Billy.

That is a mistake; but as it is yet dark it is easy to make a mistake. Julia was with the surgeon and Dave and Billy bringing up the rear, in contravention of all military regulations, which place women and surgeons in the rear.

At the door was the mother.

"Dave, my dear, dear boy."

And he is in her arms again. And all the

recrimination and hostility and heart burning fades away, and like "the baseless fabric of a vision leaves," &c.

"Blood is thicker than water," and brother and sister, mother and father, friend and lover and old servants are very human and very flesh and blood, indeed.

And it was "Howdy, Marse Dave—ain you feard ter come roun' hayar like dat? Gin'l Stuart, he cotch you sho'; en you sutt'nly is harnsome; en got er beard, too."

* * * * *

Faint and weak comes the breath. Wife and daughter, sons and lover stand by. The slaves gather in the wide hall and on the steps. It is only waiting now. They speak in whispers. The negroes out on the porch sing—

"Roll, Jordan, Roll."

Then the theme changes and a strong bass voice leads, rolling forth:

"We praise thee, O, God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship thee: the Father everlasting."

The old man moves. The surgeon puts a stimulant to his lips. He raises his head and listens, even lifting a feeble voice in chorus, and a beautiful light shines in his face as the last swelling—

"Have mercy upon us; have mercy upon us, as our trust is in thee."

“ ‘Trust is in thee; trust is in thee,’ ” he feebly murmurs.

Now the chorus changes. It is the “Gloria in Excelsis”—

“Glory be to God on high.

“And on earth peace; good will towards men.”

“We praise thee, we bless thee, we glorify thee. We give thanks to thee”—

But the surgeon drops the hand he has been holding and turns away, taking the widow on his arm out of the chamber of death.

And the peaceful witnesses of the death of the old statesman went back to their occupations of war, “battle, murder and sudden death,” and the like.

There is no chronicle of all these events, except to record that there is a very successful surgeon in the city of Baltimore, state of Maryland, named Archie. And he has a wife named Julia, and a little girl as like the Julia of old as could be, coming out of the garden wasp-stung—hair down over her shoulders; and two boys, Billy and Dave.

And Briarwood plantation is carried on by Col. Dave Randolph, who is a successful farmer, with a wife mightily like little Lucy Locke, and Col. Billy is practicing law in New York city, and getting good fees, and they are all just the most devoted brothers and sisters in the world. And Julia’s hair falls down to this very day.

CHIEF.*

THE hotel porter who came to the railroad station wore a very big brass watch chain with many seals; he was pompous in his manner and dress, and he bore a great name; for he called himself "Chief Justice John Marshall." He was commonly known as "Chief." He had belonged to the Marshall family in Virginia. That he had taken the name of the most illustrious member of the family caused no wonder. He went regularly to the station, seeking patrons for the hotel that he served. The train was late on this particular day, and I was interested in noticing that Chief seemed especially impatient and was scolding about the delay. He was expecting some one in whom he was deeply concerned, and I was amused at his impatience.

"Dey calls her de limited," he said, turning to me, "but what she's limited fer I doan' know, 'thout'n hit's ter git in behin' time. Sho' 's yer 'speck her, she's boun' ter be late, jes' ter fool yer; yaas, fool yer ev'y blessed time. En

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dat boy 'll git year arfter dark, en I 'bleeged ter git back ter dat hotel ter look arfter dem trunks. I sutt'nly is dis'p'inted, dat I is; en dat chile 'speck'n me ter meet 'im, en he doan' know no mo' 'bout dis city ner er coon. Dey sutt'nly ought ter look out 'bout dese trains; hit 's too discomposin' fer ter be hendered dis er way."

"Who are you looking for, Chief?" I asked.

"Why, de young marster, o' co'se; who you think I *could* be lookin' fer, 'sep'n him?" he replied, seeming to think I could see the perplexed state of his mind by looking at his face; "de young marster Ben, he comin' f'm Lynchbug, en he start on de train dis mawnin', en I knows de chile 's hongry en tie'd, too, travelin' all dat er way by hisse'f. Yaas, suh, he tuck de train at Lynchbug dis mawnin', en he come all de way f'm Amhust Cote House ter teck it at dat."

"Does he live here?" I inquired.

"Who? him? Ain' I jes' tell yer he live in Amhust, en dat's way down in Verginia, where I wuz borned en raise'. Yaas, suh, down in Amhust, en er good place hit is w'en you gits dar. Lemme see: dat boy 'll be sixteen year ole dis summer comin', dat he will, en I ain' seed him dis two year. Yaas, suh, hit 'll be nigher two year dan one sence I sot eyes on 'im. I 'speck he grow so I sca'cely knows 'im;

but I bet I does, fer he got he daddy eye, en he daddy walk, too. Yaas, jes' lemme see he eye en I knows 'im right off. He got er eye jes' like de marster w'at fit 'long in de wah, right 'long side Gin'l Stuart, w'at wuz killed down at de Yaller Tavern, nigh Richmun'. He die game, so de say, en dat boy 's gamer 'n his daddy. He ain' feard de debbil hisse'f."

"Is he coming here to school?" I asked, by way of keeping up the conversation.

"He? Lawd, nor, suh! He got no call ter go ter school. He smart 'nuff 'thout'n gwine ter school. Leastways de miss's ain' gwine trus' 'im dis fur 'way ter no school. She teach him herse'f, she do, en dat boy knows ez much ez de miss's. Nor, suh, he ain' got no need ter go ter no school in dis place. He jes' comin' on ter see ole Chief, dat 's all. He come 'bout onct er year, anyway, en de miss's come wid 'im sometimes. Dey ain' fergit Chief, not dey. I gits dis fer him," he added confidentially, "gits hit lars' night, en I gwine gin her to 'im soon 's he gits off'n de train en I gits nigh 'nuff ter han' her to 'im." And as he spoke he took from his pocket a really handsome silver watch with a gold chain.

"Where did you get that?" I said.

"Who? me? Ain' I jes' tell you I git hit fer de boy? Bought hit wi' my own yearnin's, too; did n' s'pose I stole her, did you?"

He was evidently indignant, and I apologized.

"Yaas, suh ! bought her wi' my own money, fer dat boy."

"And his father was your master, was he?" Chief's story was getting interesting. I wished to hear more of it.

"Yaas, suh, dat he wuz, en er good marster he wuz, fer sho' en suttin. You see my mammy she 'longed ter nuther estate f'm ourn, en long 'fo' de wah de man w'at owned her he broke up 'n wuz gwine ter de Wes'. En he say he gwine ter sell all he people ter de Georgia traders; en de marster say 't wuz er shame, en he gwine ter buy me an' my mammy anyway, fer he know'd her pussonally. So he goes to de sale, he does, en he bids her in, hern 'n me, fer er thousan' dollars. En w'en he come ter pay de money he foun' he did n' have 'nuff, en de man w'at sells us he say 't warn' no matter 'bout de cash, dat de marster could gin 'im er deed er trus' on de plantation; en so de marster he done dat, en de deed jes' run on. De miss's she wuz orneasy 'bout it, but de marster say 't wuz all right long ez he pay de intrus', but she keep tellin' 'im he better git dat deed fix'; but he wuz er keerless sort o'-man, en jes' let her run. He say he done pay de intrus', en dat wuz 'nuff."

"I suppose you left Virginia when the war came on," I remarked.

"Me? Nor, suh! I been 'way f'm dar er long time 'fo' dat. De marster he had er cousin in dis city, en he let him have me fer so much er year—kind o' hire me out ter him, you know. Yaas, I wuz hayar two year befo' de wah."

"Then the war brought you your freedom," I suggested.

"Well, suh, fur's dat," he replied, "Chief ain' wantin' no better freedom en I gits right at home. I's had ter scuffle thu some tough places sence de wah, but 't wuz easy times fer er lazy nigger at home. De warn' no boss hur-ryin' you up all day; nor, suh, dat de warn'. De han's on de plantation teck de time, yaas, plenty time, time fer eatin' en sleepin', en holidays 'nuff fer anybody. De marster wuz easy man wi' easy ways, en he did n' hurry nobody, en de did n' hurry dese'ves 'sep'n in de harves', en de 'bleeged ter hurry den ter git de crap in.

"Cap'n Jack dey calls 'im, he keeps dis hotel, en I wuz de porter, jes' like I is now, 'fo' de wah. En w'en de wah comed on he slips away Souf, en he plans ter teck me wi' 'im. But de blockade runners dey would n' teck me, so I had ter stay. But 't wuz mightily 'ginst de grain fer me ter stay, en de marster en dat boy er hiz'n en de miss's all yander in Amhust. But de warn' no he'p fer it, so de tells me. En w'en Cap'n Jack he goes away he leaves de business in he partner's han's, en he say he thought

de right thing ter do wuz ter pay me de same ez w'at he 'd pay any oder porter, seein' I wuz wuckin' studdy en de warn' no way ter sen' de wages ter de marster. So he pays me de fus' monf forty dollars in gol', en he say, 'Chief, you 'll be rich.' But I looks at de money en I say ter myse'f, 'Chief, you know dat money 'longs ter de marster, doan' you now?' En hit seem ter me de money mos' speak back, 'Dat I does—I ain' yourn, but de marster's, sho'!' Co'se I knows ef de marster wuz right here en see me teck de money he 'd say he did n' keer, fer I yearns hit myse'f, en he got 'nuff. But ev'y time I looks at dat money, en dat money looks at me, it say, en I say, 'We bofe 'longs ter de marster, me en de money, en de money en me—sho' 's def, hit do.' So I puts her away in er box; but I feard ter let her stay dar, fer I gwine in en out, en who knows but some o' dem ornery free nigger waiters at dat hotel steals hit? So I axes de cluck at de hotel, en he tecks me down ter de bank en interjuses me ter de head man, en de tecks de money en gins me a little book, en says w'en I got any mo' I mus' come right down. Yaas, suh, de treats me jes' like I wuz er gent'mun. So de nex' monf I had forty dollars mo', en I puts dat erway too. I had n' no call fer money myse'f, fer I gits my boa'd at de hotel, en I had plenty clo'es.

“But all dat time I 's stud'in' 'bout de mars-

ter 'n dat boy 'n de miss's. En I say ter myse'f, I does, de marster 's yander in Amhust, er mebbe he gone inter de ahmy, en dat boy 'n de miss's all by dese'ves, en I *knows* hit's hard times down datter way, fur I hayarn de hotel cluck say so. En den de blockade runner comed thu de lines wi' er letter ter de boss, en de tells me 'bout hit. So I says ter de blockade runner—he wuz stayin' at de hotel, pertendin' he wuz f'm some furrin country er other—I says ter him, I wants him ter teck de money thu de lines so de marster 'll git it. Well, suh, he mos' fall down, he larf so, en he say I 's de bigges' fool nigger dis side o' fool-town; dat de money 's mine ter spen' er keep, jes' 's I choose; en ez fer teckin' dat ter Amhust, he got ter go by Richmun', en like ez not he git sunk in de bottom o' de Potomac 'fore he gits 'cross; dat hit wuz dange'ser 'n er battle, crossin' de river wi' all dem gunboats in de way. Den I speaks ter 'nudder man, en he say, oh yaas, he teck her. But he mos' too ready, en I ax de hotel cluck, en he say doan' trus' 'im; he wuz er mean Jew w'at wuz carry'n' counterban' goods, en ef he tuck de money I mout never see her no mo'. So I gin hit up. But hit hu't me ter think dat de marster wuz mos' likely 'way f'm home, fer I done hayar he gone ter fight de Yankees wi' Gin'l Stuart, en wuz one o' his leadin' men too, fust in de fight en larst ter

leave off. He 'way f'm de miss's en dat boy, en dey by dese'ves on dat plantation. But de warn' no way ter he'p it. So I goes 'long, I does, en I saves ev'y cent o' de wages, en by en by de boss raise her ter sixty dollar en er good suit er clo'es, kaze de house wuz full er people all de time, en de did n' seem ter keer w'at de pays. De jes' ez leave han' Chief er dollar fer totin' er valise ter de station ez ten cents in de ole times. En one day er man—I thinks he wuz er gineral, er some sich—he gin me er five dollar gol' piece fer he'pin' him 'cross de street. He wuz er little bit lame, en he say he fightin' ter set us all free. I doan' keer fer dat, so I gits de money.

'So dis sort o' doin's gwine on fer nigh fo' year, en I wuz layin' up er right good pile o' money. Good deal o' hit wuz in gol'. En one day I wuz gittin' de cluck ter add her up fer me in de little book de bank gin me, en he say, 'Chief, you gittin' rich; you got mo' 'n nine hun'ed dollars in gol'.' 'Well,' I say, 'gol' 's money, en money 's gol'.' But he say gol' 's wuff two twenty-five. 'Well,' I say, 'w'at good dat do me?' 'Good!' he say; 'why, you kin teck dat gol' en sell her fer mo' 'n two thousand dollars in greenbacks. En dey's ez good ez gol' fer you er me eider.' En den he say, 'Chief, why doan' you spen' you' money?' But I up 'n tell him dat de money warn' mine; dat I

savin' her fer de marster. Hit 'long ter him. Den he look at me er little while, en he say, 'Chief, you too hones' fer dis worl': de quicker you gits out'n it de better!' En den he say he did n' want to hu't my feelin's, but he thinks he better tell me dat he hearn day before yis-turday dat de marster he done got killed some time befo', down at de Yaller Tavern, nigh Richmun', fightin' wi' Gin'l Stuart. He doan' like much ter tell me befo', but 't wuz sutt'nly so. Den I ax 'im 'bout de miss's 'n dat boy, en he say he doan' know much erbout 'em, but dat he hearn de all mighty po', sence de wah done 'flicted 'em so. De warn' nobody ter wuck de craps, en he 'specks de all starve mos' 'fo' de een o' things come. De niggers all lef' soon 's dey could, en he 'specks de warn' er han' lef' 'bout de place. Ez fer all de money I done save, he say ef de marster wuz livin' he got no claim on de money; dat I wuz free ez er no'thwes' win' now, en fer de matter o' dat, had been sence de proclamation; dat de warn' nobody ownin' me no more 'n de king er Cuba. But I tells 'im ez fer dat, I doan' know so much 'bout dat, but I knows w'en de marster done bought my mammy 'n me he tuck he own money ter do it, en w'en I tecks dat money fer mine, I wants hit straight f'm home fust. W'en de miss's say so, hit mought be all right, but I mus' see her fust.

“En dat night I had er dream en I see de marster. He wuz ridin’ he hoss, ’n gwine out de front gate, ter jine de ahmy. En he call me en say jes’ ’s plain ez kin be: ‘Chief, I doan’ know w’en dis wah ’s gwine ter be over, ner what ’s ter be de een o’ all dis; but ef I dies, I dies er fightin’, en I looks ter you ter see dat de miss’s en dat boy ’s tooken keer o’.’ I see dat, en hayar dat—hayar ’im en see ’im, jes’ ’s plain ez daylight. En den I knows jes’ w’at ter do.

“So I goes to de cluck en I say I gwine home—I *’bleeged* ter go. But he say de warn’ no way ter git home; dat de railroads warn’ runnin’, en not even de bridges put up. So de warn’ nuttin’ ter do ’sep’n ter wait.

“Den t’wards de fall he tells me dey done fix de railroad en de trains runnin’ thu some sort o’ way, en I seed some people w’at comed thu f’m Lynchbug, at de hotel. Dey did n’ know nuttin’ ’bout de folks at home, do’. Den I gits ready ter start. I hear ’t wuz awful hard times down dat way, en how de people w’ars de commones’ sort o’ clo’es, en how de warn’ ’nuff money in Amhust ter buy er poun’ er coffee; en ez fer sugar, dey done los’ de tas’ o’ dat. So I gits er nice little bun’le o’ sugar ’n coffee, en some tea, fer I knows de miss’s love dat, en I gits de cluck at de hotel (he sutt’nly wuz good ter me en I ain’ gwine fergit ’im

nuther) fer ter fix all de papers at de bank, so dat money all straight.

“Den I thinks 'bout dat boy en I stud'in' 'bout some clo'es fer 'im. I 'specks he grow right smart, so I gits er suit, de nices' one in de sto', en er nice paar er shoes, de fines' dey had in de sto', en er bag er candy, en I wuz 'bout ready. I wuz mighty 'tic'l'r 'bout dat money, kase I knows de miss's wuz 'tic'l'r, en she uster say dat *somebody* had ter be 'tic'l'r, else dey all be in de po'house, de marster wuz so keerless en easy-goin'. So I gits de papers fix so ef anythin' happ'n ter me 't would be all right fer de miss's. I know'd de miss's, do', mighty well, en I mistrus' ef she teck dat money. She mighty quaar sometimes 'bout w'at 's hern, but I gits er stifficut f'm de bank sayin' de money wuz all right, all 'sep'n some change I tucken out ter trabbel wi'.

“En now I wuz ready ter start. I kep' thinkin' 'bout dat dream, en it seem jes' like de marster wuz jes' overhead o' me all de time, sayin', 'Chief, teck cayar o' dat boy an' de miss's.'

“I wuz stud'in' 'bout home all de time, mos', fer I ain' fergit 'em, ef 't wuz er long time. I know'd dat de marster wuz killed in de wah, en I know'd all de han's lef' de place. I seed one er two o' em endurin' o' de wah, comin' thu dis very depot, en de say de gwine ter Boston.

En I ax 'em 'bout de place en de people, en de tells me suttin'. But I ax 'em ain' de shame ter run off en leave de miss's now dat de mars-ter wuz gone; en de looks right sheepish 'bout hit. But de say all de niggers in de county done gone. I doan' b'l'ave dat, fer I know I ain' runnin' erway, but I stud'in' how ter git back. En I know one thing fer suttin': ef dem niggers git ter Boston, en furdur 'n dat, de won' fin' no home ez good ez Amhust, en no frien' ez good ez de miss's. Nor, suh, dat de won'. En de axes me w'at I doin' all dis time; w'en I tells 'em how much I meck, en how I done save it fer de miss's en dat boy, de jes' larfs at me en say I's er bigger fool 'n w'en I lef' home—dat I wuz free en dat de money wuz mine—all de niggers wuz free. Den I up 'n tells 'em dat de ain' got sense ter meck money fer desè'ves, let 'lone de miss's. Yaas, suh, I know dem niggers ain' gwine fin' no quarters en hick'y logs on de fire en 'taters roastin' in de ashes, let 'lone 'possums en coons ready fer ketchin' 'n cookin'. En I tells 'em de ain' no dodgin' wuck up datter way, ner meckin' b'l'ave you got er chill, en havin' de miss's sen' you er dram ter keep hit off. Nor, suh, home's good 'nuff fer dis nigger, 'n I wuz gittin' mo' 'n mo' longiner fer it.

“I wuz sayin' 't wuz t'wards fall, but I b'l'aves hit wuz nigher Chris'mus, en I wuz

thinkin' 'bout hawg-killin', en I gits er mighty longin' fer some o' dat sossige dat de miss's meck, she en Jane de cook. Hit jes' melt in you' mouf. En dar wuz de hasslets en tripe, en—why, my Lawd, suh, dat wuz livin'! En hominy! De good ole hominy de meck in de mortar hollered out'n er log, en Big Sam ter beat her wi' er pestle! Meck my mouf water dis minnit!

"I tecks de kayars at dis ve'y depot, en I starts fer Amhust. I gits so busy thinkin' dat I draps off ter sleep, en ef de corndocter hed n' wake' me up I 'specks I sleep all de way ter No'th C'liner. Ez it wuz de kayars carry me pas' de Amhust station en clean ter Lynchbug. So I gits off at Lynchbug, en it wuz way in de night. De warn' nuttin' ter do 'sep'n ter wait tell daylight, so I sot by de fire in de station en doze twell mawnin'. En I looks out'n de win-der, en de wuz right smart fall er snow, en I feels mighty like stickin' by dat fire. But dat warn' right, so I picks up my bun'le 'n starts mos' 'fo' day. En all de way I's thinkin' 'bout home en I gits longiner en longiner ter see 'em.

"'T warn' so ve'y fur ter de Cote House, en de ole place wuz jes' beyan', 'bout er mile er so. So I gits dar in time fer breakfus', en tries ter hunt up somebody I knows; but de warn' nobody 'bout dat know'd me. I done been gone so long, dey done fergitted me clean out

en out. Well, I say, de miss's en dat boy ain' fergit me, I sho' o' dat—de know me de fus' sight. I sot by de fire in de Cote House warm-in' myse'f, en ef I did 'n git ter nappin' ergin! Yaas, suh, fer er fac'; en w'en I wakes up de bell wuz ringin', en de judge wuz comin' in, en de sheriff wuz hollerin', 'Oh yes, oh yes;' en when I hears dat I says I 's home now fer sho'. Fer de marster uster be de sheriff in de ole times, en many 's de time I heard 'im holler 'Oh yes,' jes' dat way. But w'en I looks at dat man w'at wuz hollerin' I say ter myse'f, 'Dat man ain' no Marshall; no, ner none er de stock 'bout hayar.' I liss'n, en he talk thu he nose like dem Yankee fellers in de wah. You cayrn't fool me 'bout you' speechifyin'; I knows de Ole Verginia speech e'vy time. So I sot dar, en de did n' nobody say nuttin' ter me, ner I say nutti' ter none er dem.

'Putty soon de journs de cote, en de say de gwine ter have a sale. So de man what hollers 'Oh yes,' he gits on de Cote House steps en reads some papers 'bout 't wuz 'cordin' de deed o' trus', en say de gwine sell de ole Marshall place. When I hayars dat I wakes up fer good, fer when he calls de Marshall name you know I boun' ter liss'n. So I gits up clost, en he say how de place wuz one er de fines' in de county, er Ole Verginia homestead, 'bout fo' hun'ed acres mo' o' less, wi' timber en house en outbuildin's.

“En I say ter myse’f, ‘Name er Gord! de gwine ter sell my ole miss’s home!’ I tell you, suh, I wuz so tecken erback I mos’ fergit my own brudder. So I sez to myse’f, ‘I gwine ter speak ter de jedge, so I is’—I see ’im stan’in’ clost by. So I aidge over his way en ax if ’t wuz er fac’, de sellin’ de ole Marshall place. En he say ’t wuz so, dat wuz de place. Well, suh, it fayar meck me grunt. En I ax ’im warn’ de no way ter stop hit? ‘Nor,’ he say, ‘not ’less’n you buys it,’ en he larf when he say dat. ‘Dat ’s er fac’, suh,’ sez I, ‘en I ’s mightily ’bleeged ter you. I had n’ thought o’ that.’ En all of a suddent hit come over me all ’bout de marster hirin’ me out in Baltimo’, at de hotel, en how good he wuz ter me, he en de miss’s, en how de good Lawd hed prospered me en he’p me pick up all dat money, en how I had dat honin’ ter come home, en I gits dar jes’ in de nick er time wi’ de money I ’specks rightly ’longs ter de miss’s—mos’ o’ hit, any-way; en please Gord, I gwine ter buy de place dis day ef de money hol’ out!

“I ’s er ’lig’us man, suh, en sometimes in de meetin’ I gits kinder happy, en feels like shout-in’. But de Lawd knows I feels mo’ like shout-in’ jes’ den dan in all de meetin’s put togeder; I b’l’eves I did holler jes’ er little. But de auctioneer wuz cryin’ de sale, en sayin’ dat de deed o’ trus’ wuz er thousan’ dollar, en how de

wuz fo' year intrus' on it, but dat de cote had 'cided dat de could n' c'lect de intrus' w'at had growed endurin' o' de wah, en de place wuz fer sale, en, gentermuns, how much you give? Did n' nobody seem like de want ter bid, en one man say de warn' er thousan' dollars in de county, en he warn' sho' de wuz in de state. En one feller he start her at a hun'ed dollars, en de auctioneer larf 'n say it teck dat much fer buy er graveyard; en de oder man say de wuz plenty er men like him git graveyards down hayar fer nuttin' not so ve'y long ergo, 'sep'n fer de bul-lit hit took fer fetch 'em. So dat start a larf, en de auctioneer say, 'Gentermuns, dis place is boun' ter be sol', even ef she doan' sell fer mo' 'n nuff ter pay de deed er trus'. Dis place wuz wuth fo' thousan' dollars ef hit wuz wuth er cent.'

"Den I steps up clost en I ax 'im, 'How much you say is owin' on de place?'

" 'One thousan' dollars,' he say.

"Den hit all come over me like er streak er lightnin' 'bout dat deed er trus' de marster put on de place ter buy me 'n my mammy ter keep us f'm bein' sol' ter Georgia; en now I knows how de good Lawd he done sont me down hayar dis day, jes' in de nick er time. 'T wuz Providence, sho'; so I knows now jes' what ter' do. I mecks up my min', en I steps up ter de front en I say, 'I buy de place myse'f.'

"Well, suh, you ought ter hayar de people larf, en somebody say de bottom rail gittin' on top, sho', w'en de Marshall place 'longs ter er nigger. De hung one, so he say, lars' week, fer sheep-stealin', en he ax me whar I f'm. En I tells 'im, en he ax my name; en w'en I tells 'im dat, he bus' out, 'Why, I know de man! I seed him in Baltimo' many er time w'en I wuz blockade runnin'.'

"En sho' 'nuff, 't wuz de ve'y blockade runner I seed at de hotel dar—not de Jew one, but de one w'at brung de letter f'm Amhurst. So I tecks him one side, fer I did n' want ev'ybody meddlin' in my business, en I shows him de stiffcut f'm de bank. En he say he know de bank well; en de judge step up, en he say *he* knows her too, dat 't wuz good ez gol'. So dey bofe 'grees ter go on de bon' er condemnation, en de auctioneer say, 'All right, ole man, de place is yourn.'

"I steps ercross inter de cluck's office wi' 'im, en gits de deed er release, as de calls hit; anyway de fix it all right so 't wuz my place.

"But 't warn' my place, suh! Nor, suh! 't wuz de miss's, en so I say he mus' fix her so she 'long ter de miss's. So he fix some mo' papers, en he git me ter meck my cross in de right place, en he gits 'nudder gent'mun ter witness ter it, en he say, 'You done sign hit over ter de Widow Marshall.'

“ ‘Dat ’s right,’ I say; ‘dat ’s jes’ what I want.’

“Den he larf er little at me, en I hearn one o’ de gent’muns say my heart wuz bigger ’n my haid. But I ain’ keerin’ now, en I gits ready ter start fer home ergin.

“ ‘T warn’ so fur, ’bout er mile er so ’cross de fiel’, en de day wuz Chris’mus Eve. Lawd, how many Chris’musses I had on dat ole place ! en good ones too. ’T warn’ none o’ your one day Chris’mus, en gwine ter chutch harf de time at dat. Nor, suh ! ’t wuz er good solid week, en mo’ ’n dat. Ef Chris’mus wuz er Friday, de han’s stop wuck Thu’sday, en de wuck no mo’ ’n twell arfter de New Year. No, not twell de Monday arfter de New Year. En den de done jes’ ez de please. De warn’ no overseer on dat place. De marster say w’en his han’s ’bleeged ter have er overseer, he doan’ want ’em no mo’. He de boss hisse’f, en he boss good part o’ de time wi’ he eyes shet. Ef ’t warn’ fer de miss’s, I doan’ know what ’d come ter de place. She ’bleeged ter boss er leetle.

“So all de ole times gone, en de marster killed at de Yaller Tavern, fightin’ wi’ Gin’l Stuart, en de miss’s en dat boy wi’ Chris’mus ’mos’ hayar, en dey thinkin’ de place sol’ over de haid. I pulls out right lively when I thinks o’ dat, en jes’ fo’ sundown I sighted de ole

place. I 'specks hit wuz de sunshine on de snow, kinder blindin' my eyes, er somehow de water kep' comin' in my eyes anyway. So I walks up ter de kitchen do', en ef dar warn' dat ole setter dawg o' de marster's layin' on de steps like he been dar all he days! I notice he did n' bark nor look at me, en w'en I gits clost ter 'im I see he stone blin', en I b'l'eves he deaf too. Dawgs gits ole farster 'n people. But I feels kinder shy o' 'im fer all dat, so I goes up ter de do' mighty cautious en try de latch, en 't wuz locked. 'T wuz de fust time Chief ever foun' dat do' locked agin him! So I goes 'roun' ter de po'ch, at de front do', en I peeps in de winder, en I sees de miss's en dat boy! She wuz settin' by de fire in er big cheer—de same one she sot in 'fo' I went erway—'t wuz her gran'mother's, so de say, en brung f'm 'cross de water—en dat boy wuz settin' 'longside o' her, on de flo', wi' he haid in her lap. Lawd, suh! I ain' seed nuttin' like dat fer I doan' know how long. Dar de set, jes' like 'fo' de wah, en she wuz pushin' he hayar back f'm he forred. En dat boy he had he arm roun' her; en doan' you know, suh, he wuz mos' er man.

“Well, suh, I bus' out larfin, en I say ter myse'f, 'Name er de Lawd, how dat boy gwine ter git hisse'f inter dem clo'es en dem shoes? He big 'nuff fer two suits er clo'es.' En I larf so dey bofe jump up en looks 'roun', en den I see

he daddy over agin, eyes en mouf en hayar en all. En when he step, he step proud like he daddy. So he come ter de do' en opens hit, en he ax me w'at I wan', jes' 's perlite ez de mars-ter hese'f, fer he wuz er gentermun ter ev'y-body. En jes' den er sudden notion tuk me, en I say I wuz beggar man f'm Lynchbug. He say he sorry fer me, but dat I come beggin' ter er beggar house; dat de wuz sca'cely er man er woman in de state po'er 'n dem.

"En while he wuz talkin', de miss's git up f'm de cheer, en ez she tu'n roun', I see her hayar all tu'n white dat wuz black ez er crow w'en I went erway, en de wrinkles done come in her face. But she wuz putty yet, spite o' dat. En she come ter de do', en she say, 'Ole man, I 's sorry fer yo, en wish I could he'p yo.' En w'en I gin ter look at her, her clo'es wuz meaner dan de meanes' han' on de place in de ole times; en I look at her shoes, en de wuz all wored out en ragged, en de warn' bofe erlike. Dat 's er fac'! But de hel' de haid up all de same, do' hit wuz plain de 'flections drag 'em down.

"I see de miss's lookin' at dat boy, en den I see de tears in her eyes. I could n' stan' dat, en I draps de bun'les on de po'ch, en I bus' right out er cryin', en I say:—

" 'Miss's, doan' you know me? doan' you know Chief?'

"Well, suh, you oughter seed her face light up like de sun risin' on hit.

" 'Why, so 't is !' she say, 't is Chief come back. You been gone so long we thought you 'd forgetted us, or wuz daid. You mus' come in, Chief, and I 'll try to git you somethin' to eat.'

"En you know, suh, she retched out bofe o' her han's ter me, en shuck han's wi' me same 's I wuz er white gentermun ! She did fer er fac'. En dat boy he keep he eye on me, like he feard hit warn' all right, fer you know, suh, he 'd growed out'n all 'membunce er *me*. So I goes in, I did, en sot down, at home en thankful fer it.

"En den de miss's ax me whar I cum f'm lars', en I tells her f'm de Cote House. En she start ter ax me 'bout de sale, but she kin' o' choke en stop. En den I fumbles wi' my bun'les, en I say 'I bring you all some Chris'mus, sence I ain' been home fer so long.' En I showed 'em de coffee en sugar en de oder little things, en I say I hope she 'll 'cept 'em f'm Chief, fer I 'members 'em all de time I wuz erway.

"She smile her ole way, like she smile befo' de wah, en she say she sudd'nly is thankful, en hit wuz real kind ter 'member 'em, 'bove all times at Chris'mus. En den I pull out de suit er clo'es en de shoes, en I say I feard I meck er mistake 'bout dat boy; I fergits he growin' so.

'T wuz er nice suit, do', en bofe of 'em larf right hearty; fer de pants wuz mos' up ter de boy's knees, en ez fer de coat, hit warn' much mo' 'n big 'nuff fer one side o' 'im. But de miss's say she do b'l'eve she kin w'ar de shoes herse'f. En doan' you know, suh, de fits her fus' rate. De wuz nice shoes, wi' low quarters en buckles.

"So de all sets down, en I stan's up by de fireplace, en I see by de miss's face she think-in' 'bout de marster. She look at dat boy, en den she look at me, en she say, 'Chief, I s'pose you know de cunnel's daid?'

"I say, 'Yaas, 'm; I hayars dat 'fo' de wah close.'

"'He wuz er brave man,' she say, 'en de bring 'im home en bury 'im in de fambly bury-in'-groun' out dar.'

"Den arter er while dey tole me 'bout de sellin' er de ole place. Well, suh, I could n' stan' no mo', en I say ter de miss's, 'I done buy de place myse'f.'

"'What!' she say. 'I doan' un'erstan'!' En she look kin' o' white in de face.

"'Yaas, 'm,' I say, 'I done buy de place. Hit my place; dat is, hit you all's place. I tell you I done buy de place dis day at de Cote House. Hayar de deed.' En I pulls de paper out'n my pocket, en shoves hit inter her han', en say, 'De marster, he done hire me out up yander in Baltimo', en I saves de money when

de wah comes on same 's 't wuz his'n. Yaas, 'm, dat I did. En I fotches de money wi' me, en I bid in de place, en gits de cluck ter 'lease de deed er trus', en meck de whole place over ter you all, en hayar 'is. Hit 's all yourn, you 'n dat boy. Yaas, 'm.'

“Well, suh, I thought she 'd er drapt, she looked so white. But in er minnit she comed ter herse'f, en de color comed back in her face, mo' 'n I seed all de time I 'd been dar. En she tu'n ter dat boy, en she say, 'Han' me dat Bible, son,' en she open hit en read dat saarm commencin', 'Bless de Lawd, O my soul,' en it soun' like de voice er de angels comin'.”

With grinding, screeching brakes and clang of bells the Southern train wound into the station. As Chief stepped forward, I saw alight from the car a tall, bright-faced youth, with a keen eye and an elastic step, and running up to Chief he put his arm through his, and the two disappeared in the crowd.

WILL NEDMUNDS'S CHRISTMAS.

OF course, every man in the regiment knew Nedmunds—Will, we called him. He was a quiet fellow, probably about thirty years old, who never talked about himself, nor bragged about his doings, although I do think, if any man had a right to make a parade of himself, it might be Will, for certainly there was not a braver fellow or one more ready for any desperate adventure than he. I have seen many of these boasting fellows, who would sit around a camp-fire and tell all kinds of yarns about what they had done—how much of it was true the Lord only knows; but you never heard Will at anything like that. If you got the telling of an adventure out of him, it was like getting the cork out of a bottle after it has been shoved inside. But that is neither here nor there, for a tale is like a piece of varnished wood, its looks, or I should say its sound, depends much on its polish, and Will was not the man to do that sort of thing, he was not “built that way.”

But, as I said before, he was always ready—ready for duty, ready for adventure, and it

seems to me as I look back at the times we had together that he would really and truly rather fight than eat. I never saw such a fellow. Of course, there were times when a man, if he felt a little off, could say to the colonel that he was not exactly up to the mark, and if it was the same to him would he be allowed to stay in the line, and not take the skirmish work. But you never saw that in Will. I have known him to ask a man to let him take his place, when there was work to do which most likely would be the last of the workers, or fighters. Yet, Will was not a daredevil at all, and I am sure he was not trying to get killed, but he was just a born fighter, and was happiest when in it.

No; he wanted to live, there is no doubt about that; for, when we got to talking about home and wife and children—about the things that a man, when he is quiet, thinks most about and dreams most about—then Will could talk until it sounded like poetry he was reciting, and his voice would grow low and tremble as he spoke.

We were so often together on picket and on scout duty that we seemed to know each other through and through; although he was not a man to talk much about his wife and child, or about the old mother who, he said with tears in his eyes, buckled his sabre belt about his waist and told him that although she loved him

so she could die as joyfully for him as ever her Savior died for the world's sins, yet she had rather see him brought home dead than in disgrace. I went home with him once, soon after we enlisted—we were after some forage for our horses in the Valley—and I remember well her low, soft voice and gentle smile, as she spoke. She laid her hand on my head, as I stood before her and told me Will was her only boy, the hope of the family, she said, and that she had not the slightest fear that he would not act as honorably away from her as with her, for he was his father's own son, but would not I take a sort of brotherly interest in him, and in case he was sick or anything, take care of him as well as I could? It was this that made me feel like a brother to Will, and he to me, and the truth is no one who knew him as I did but would have said about him that, if they did not have a brother and could, so to speak, elect one, Will would be the first choice.

This was up in the Valley, not far from Harrisonburg, and his wife lived down in the Luray part of the Valley. He looked down that way as he turned his horse's head towards his own home—looked long and sadly. Then he turned to me and said:

“Tom, old fellow, you don't know until you have a wife and child, how one feels about such things. Down there lives all (excepting, of

course, dear mother) that makes life for me. I enjoy living, I take the dearest delight in drawing in this fine mountain air and feeling the warm blood run through my veins; there is not a nerve in me that does not quiver with pleasure as I sit on this horse and feel as if I were a part of him, so to speak. But down there in that valley lives my little woman and the little girl and the baby boy, and you can not tell how I long to turn my horse that way and see them. But orders are orders, and duty is duty, and you and I must be beyond the ridge and on the way to Culpeper before night."

Then he began to talk, as I said as if he were reciting some old poetry, and it was a wonder to see his eye, and hear his fine voice tremble as he told me long stories of her, and how he had first met her in the old log school house in the mountains, when she was only a bit of a miss, and how he had carried her over the ford in his arms, when the water was up to his waist, so she could get home after the freshet, and how people teased him and tormented him about his clumsy ways of waiting on her, and how he had hoped, and despaired, and hoped again, all the time ready to kiss the very tracks she made in the path, and how, as she grew up, and put up her long hair and put on long dresses, and her deep blue eyes grew to look like violets and her voice as soft and low as an April wind. She

became shy and more reserved, until one day, just as the apple-blossoms were their sweetest and the mocking bird had come back and he and his mate were looking for a nesting place, he told how he made love to her, and she put her hand in his—Oh! 'twas as pretty as a picture the way he told it, though it may sound awkward as I tell it now.

So we turned our horses' heads toward the Piedmont, and for the next six months Jeb Stuart and Stonewall had us on the trot, until we hardly had time to breathe; only once in a while, as Will and I had turns together on picket we talked—he always of the little house and the sweet mother and little blue-eyed girl that the Lord had sent them—she now being six years old and “her mother all over to the finger-nails,” so he said, and that boy! And I do not doubt it, for they say the mother influences us most, though, if that is so, I do not see why *I'm* not better.

So the days flew by, and we seemed to be living as fast as the wind, with march, fight, camp, retreat, sometimes in Virginia, sometimes over the Potomac in Maryland, but go, go, until it seemed to me that we had covered every foot of Virginia ground and some North, where they say the people do nothing but make something for other folks; and, we thought, made lots of mischief by meddling in our matters.

But that is neither here no there, and this story I am telling does not concern more than two or three people, though why it takes so long to tell it I can hardly say.

Will was where he always was, at the front, when there was a chance to get there, and the army was at Brandy Station. This was in the summer or fall, and the "Yanks" were on the Fauquier side of the river, and holding the line close to the bank, when some one said the general wanted the bridge burned. Just how to do it was a question, for it was right under the fire of the guns of the enemy, and you would have said a man was crazy to try going down to the bridge and setting it on fire. But the general had said he wanted it done, but kind-hearted man that he was, he would rather, so far as danger was concerned, have gone down himself than to have sent any of the boys into that death-trap.

I was one of the general's orderlies, and he called me and asked me to see if any of the men would volunteer. I was not half through asking when Will Nedmunds stepped to the front and said:

"Tom, you needn't look any further, I'll go."

He said it just as quietly as if he was wrapping his blanket around him for a nap, and as don't-care as if life was not worth a snap. Half a dozen men stepped out of the ranks in a

twinkling, but the general said one could do the work as well as twenty, and it was not worth while to run risks; though I heard him say to one of his aides that it was more than a risk, it was almost certain death. But if Will was scared he did not show it, except perhaps to turn a trifle pale, and he stepped up to the general and asked him just what he wanted done.

Then he hesitated a little and said:

"General, that's a close place, and I may not get back. Would you mind taking care of this for me? If I get out, all right, but if I don't, won't you let one of the boys take it over the mountains to Luray? It's only my little girl's picture," he added, "but I'd rather know you had it than those fellows over there."

"May I look at it?" asked the general.

"Of course, if you want to. She's the only girl, and as much like her mother as one apple-blossom's like another."

He opened the case for the general to look, and sure enough it was a little girl's picture, with curly hair and big, soft blue eyes, and mischief all around her mouth, just like she was a laughing to herself. As for the general, he seemed to be taken with a sudden cold or something, for he turned his head away, and used his handkerchief freely, and it seemed as if the cold had got in his eyes, too, for he wiped them more than once. He had little girls him-

self, so I heard, and that made him and Will close together at once, and I heard him say to himself like:

“It shall go if I have to take it myself.”

He put it carefully away in his pocket, but I think more solemn than usual, and his voice—he had one of the sweetest voices I ever heard—it was like the low, soft notes of a flute, and deep as low thunder.

But Will did not wait for further orders. He stepped down to where there was an old engine-house, part of one of the old broken-down locomotives was still standing there, and got a lot of cotton waste, greasy stuff, some splinters of dry wood, and off he started.

The “Yanks” saw him, of course, but I do not think they rightly understood just what he was after—may be they thought the cotton waste was a sort of flag of truce—but any way they did not fire a gun until he had walked all the way down to the bridge, though it must have been nearly a hundred yards.

He crept down under the timbers, on the Culpeper side, and in a minute or so smoke was rising.

When the enemy saw what he was driving at there must have been a thousand guns a minute. I suppose the bridge-timbers kept him pretty safe, and we watched him from where we stood, putting on logs and bits of

timber, just as cool as if he was getting ready to scald hogs, until finally the whole thing was in a blaze and then he started back. How he ever got back alive must have been a miracle; for he stood about as good a chance of dodging between raindrops in a shower as miss being hit by some of the bullets. But they say a man can not die until his time comes and I almost believe it; for Will's coat was full of bullet holes, and three through his hat. You or I would have run back, but Will felt, I suppose, that the eyes of the generals of both armies were on him, a sort of general review I may say. Do you know he walked back just as dignified as though he was on dress parade? It was the finest thing I ever saw, and I heard the general say that he almost envied him his distinction.

As quick as a flash, almost, Pelham's guns were in position, and, when they began to talk the enemy had plenty to do to answer, without troubling Will, and when he got up where the general stood he reached out his hand, and the general shook it as though Will was an old friend he had not seen for years. And what do you suppose Will said?

"General, I didn't mean to shake hands, I only wanted my little girl back again."

But I tell you he was proud of that handshake all the same.

But about the Christmas story? Well, I declare, when I get to talking about these old times I almost forget where I am; or that I am not there still. This minute I can see that grand old gentleman, "Mars Bob," we used to call him—behind his back, of course—and hear him speak. As I said before he had the most beautiful voice and the kindest eye. It was pleasant to hear him speak, even if you did not know what he was saying. They say soldiers are butchers, but that man was no butcher. When I was at school I remember reading a story of an old gentleman who was mightily pestered by a big fly, that kept lighting on his bald head, and at last he caught it and instead of killing it he hoisted the window and put it out, saying that there was room enough in the world for them both. Well, to my mind, the general was a great deal like that old gentleman; he would not hurt a fly much less a man or a child. And he was just as polite to the raggedest private in the ranks as he was to General Hill himself.

We were in winter quarters at Orange Courthouse, and it was rough weather and hard times for the army. You can judge for yourself, when I tell you that for a whole month we hadn't a blessed thing in camp to eat but corn meal. As for meat, well there might have been a little once a week, or such a matter; and it

was, if anything, worse than it was below Petersburg in '64, when we had a pint of corn meal and a quarter of a pound of bacon, when we could get the bacon. We had a review I remember one day, and the general himself passed along the line. You would have thought he was not looking, but he was, and he stopped a few paces below me and says to one of the men: "Where's your hat, my man?"

"Under my feet, General," said the poor fellow, and sure enough it was true. He had not a scrap of shoe to his foot, and had pulled off his old hat and was standing on it to keep his feet off the frozen ground.

The general heaved a big sigh, and looked troubled, and he took the name and regiment of the poor devil, asking the colonel for it, of course, for he did everything like a gentleman, and that same evening he sent the man a pair of shoes from his own private stock, and with the shoes sent a message that made the boy so proud he would hardly speak to the remainder of the company for a time.

It was during this winter that Will Nedmunds got leave to go home. He did not ask for a regular furlough, for he was a scout and might be needed at camp for special duty at any time. I said he got it to go home, but it was not likely that he would go anywhere else, as he had not seen his folks for some months.

He struck out straight for the gap in the ridge, the nearest way home, and I expect that horse of his did as good duty on that home trip as he had ever done in the face of the enemy. As he went over the hill beyond the camp, the sun was just setting and the band was playing "Home, Sweet Home." It seemed like it was intended, it was so like what might be. But there was not a man in all that camp who would have called Will back, or taken his leave from him, for a man like Will, who was always so ready to do a good turn by others was bound to have friends.

Camp and soldier life is a great thing for bringing a fellow out in his true character. You can not play the hypocrite there, nor sail under false colors. A man may be as mean as a dog at home, and it may be people away from home will not find it out; but I will defy any man to be anything but himself in camp life. And I am sure there is no place under heaven where meanness gets less favor shown it than among soldiers. At least that's my observation.

I was detailed for scout duty in the Valley not long after Will left for home, but it was long enough for us to wonder, in camp, what had become of him. For, not many days after he left, a furloughed man came back and said he had come by Will's home, and his wife had

not seen or heard a word from him, except that he was coming home on leave. The colonel said he was sure something had happened, for Will was not the man to shirk duty, and he would have been worse than a brute if he had not gone as straight home as his horse could carry him. We did have a few men who got leave of absence and went over into West Virginia, as they called that slice of mountains they took from the old State, but Will Nedmunds was not that sort. So the first thing I did when I got over in the Valley, near Front Royal, was to strike out for Will's home, and see his wife, and, if I could, find out something about him.

It was up near Luray, and I had a few days to spare. I had to slip between the lines, for the "Yanks" were pretty thick, and were making their brags about not leaving enough for a crow to feed on; and they came very near doing it, too. But anybody can fight women and children, and as for burning houses and barns, anybody can tell you that the wild Indians used to do that. The enemy had moved up the Valley, and had a force at Woodstock, and around Front Royal, and although I could have gone around by Little Washington and across the ridge that way, it was too much trouble to go so far out of my way, so I slipped in between the pickets along the edge of the ridge, and got

through without trouble, though I did stumble on one half-frozen "Dutch Yank," standing picket and took his things away from him—I did not want *him*—I was going the wrong way for that—a prisoner would have been in my way.

It was Christmas Eve, in the morning. The sun rose over the ridge and painted a clear-weather sign in the clouds, bright and red and gold. It was wonderfully pretty, and I wish I had the way of telling such things Will had; but then he was a sort of natural born poet, so the colonel said, and everything he told was like a sweet story or song—these things come natural to some people; but it was not my luck to be anything more than just a plain, everyday sort of plodder, with not a bit of poetry in me, though, I think, I appreciated it in other people, certainly in Will. Away down in the Valley the fog lay like a wide sea, white and smooth, with here and there a tree-top sticking up through it as if a ship had gone down and left a tall mast above the water to tell the tale of loss and death. A little white cloud slid down the side of the mountain floating along like a bit of smoke and vanishing into nothing, like life goes out in the night and the spirit flies away, away—but now I do believe I'm just repeating something I heard Will say one night as we sat by the camp-fire and talked. I know

it was sharp and frosty in the mountain, although I remember the season was mild, and, the days, when the sun came out, were rather warm.

It was a queer way of spending Christmas Eve, prowling around in these mountains, when one ought to be peaceably at home for Christmas. But it was as it was ordered by a higher hand than mine, and so all I had to do was to obey. I was young and adventurous and was rather looking for trouble than dodging it. So I went on, looking for Will's home, which was up in the mountain, not far from Luray, and in an out-of-the-way sort of place.

One trouble I had about getting along fast was that people would stop me to ask the news. Up in those places, far away from everybody, about the only way they had of getting the news was to stop passers-by and hear it that way. I remember one old man, feeble and shaky, stopping me and asking if I had heard from his son Sam. Poor old fellow! he was failing in mind, no doubt, for he asked me over and over all about Sam, not being able to remember the remainder of the name. It was surely pitiful to see him, with his long white hair blowing in the wind, and his shaky, trembling voice—he had forgotten his own name, but not that of his son—and the tears ran down the furrows in his cheeks, and his voice quiv-

ered as he shook his head sadly, saying that Sam went with the cavalry years ago, and some news had come to him that he was killed, and other news that he died far away in a Northern prison, but he did not know how it was, but may be I could tell him about his son. Poor old fellow ! I *did* know, but it was no use trying to tell him, for Sam was one of my own fellow-soldiers—and as brave as brave could be, and a kindlier soul never lived this side of heaven. I remember him at Fredericksburg, how the “Yanks” were lying thick as leaves in November, just outside the breastworks—poor fellows, they made a mighty brave charge that time, but they might as well have charged against the side of this mountain—and they lay groaning and calling for water. Sam Winston, brave boy ! was just a few steps down the line, and he called to me that the cries of the wounded were more than he could stand. There was one man, a fine-looking fellow, not ten feet away, dreadfully wounded, and calling for water, and what should Sam do but jump over the earthwork, canteen in hand, the bullets flying, and shells bursting, and he went up to the poor dying man and lifted his head, gave him a drink from his canteen, and put his broken limbs in an easier position, and ran back, without a scratch. That was Sam Winston and here was his poor old father, so weak-

minded he had forgotten his own name, but remembered his son's!

I suppose I was about a hundred yards or so from Will's house, when I saw in the road just ahead of me a little girl, and as she turned her head, bless me! if she wasn't the original of the picture Will had the day he burned the bridge. She had seen me coming, or heard the horse's hoofs in the road, and she put up her hand to shield her eyes from the sun; and seeing I was not a "Yank," came running towards me calling out: "Oh, I was in hopes you was papa; we expect him every day—don't you know him?"

"It's him I'm looking for now, little girl," I said. "I was in hopes I'd find him home with you. We belong to the same company and the same mess down at the camp in Orange. Hasn't he come home at all?"

And then I saw I had made a mistake, and destroyed her little hopes; no, not all, for a child's hopes bloom always fresh; but I saw a cloud come over her sweet face and the big blue eyes fill up with tears, and I felt as mean almost as if I had told her a lie.

We walked along the path, we two, I leading the horse, and she holding my hand. In a minute or so her pretty face grew brighter, and she told me in the sweetest childlike way of how her papa had written that he would be

home a month ago, to spend Christmas, on a leave of absence, and how her ma had expected him, and got what she could ready to make him welcome; though I said to myself that God knows the woman who would marry Will and then not make him welcome home from the army must be a hard one! And so the dear child rattled on about the baby and about papa, and about her dear, dear mother, till we were at the door.

Somebody inside heard voices, and the door opened quickly. I saw such a face! I suppose she had hoped it was Will come at last, and when she saw only the child and me the glad look faded and a sign hung out of such utter pain and heart-misery as only can appear on a woman's face, and a woman who loves, and has well nigh lost hope. But in a minute she brightened up, for women have a wonderful way of clearing up as it were—I think it's easier for their souls to peep out of their eyes than it is for men's—at least I heard Will say that. She looked very pale and thin, as if she had had but little food. When I saw that face I knew just what made Will the sort of man he was. She had never seen me, but Will had written to her about me, so it was not as if I were a stranger. She asked me all about him, but I am afraid if you had put me on oath

a minute afterwards I could not have told what I said.

"No," she said to me, "Will hadn't come home, and not a word from him since his letter saying he would be home such a day, as near as he could. A passing scout had brought the letter, and later some one else passing that way said that they had seen Will on the road, near the gap in the mountain." That was all. No, not all, but she could hardly tell the rest, for—and here she stopped and turned her head away—"his horse had come home, with the bridle and saddle on, and the stirrup-leather cut in two as with a bullet!"

There was not much talk after that. The girl took the baby, a big chunk of a boy, and a small Will he was all over—took him out of doors, and the woman tried to talk again; but it was hard work, and I could see she was not thinking about me at all, but just thinking aloud about Will. I thought *I* knew him right well, but when I saw what a hold he had on that woman's heart and heard what *she* thought of him, I gave it up. I only wish there was somebody to talk that way about me!

But she did not believe he was dead: no, not a bit of it. And I tell you I had a very queer feeling to come over me as I sat there and heard her telling of a sort of vision at night and of seeing Will. It was really awful, for she saw

things so plainly ! I remember hearing a man read something out of a book, he called it "Idlings of the Kings," or some such name, and it seemed that there was some wonderful and holy thing no one could see unless that one was perfectly pure and clean and had always been sinless. And it seemed to me that this woman saw, for her eyes grew brighter as she talked, and her voice clear and strong, and sounded as cheerfully as that of a mocking-bird in the spring, as she told me that she had this vision and saw him as plainly as if it had been clear day. No, she was not dreaming at all, for her eyes were wide open, and she saw the stars shining bright and clear through the window, and she heard the chickens crowing for day. She saw him riding over the mountain road, on his way home. He was near the top of the ridge and instead of keeping up the mountain on the main road he turned to the right and vanished out of sight.

All this was strange enough, but what she saw afterwards was still more so. Soon she said she saw him again, and now he seemed to be hurt, and was on foot, dragging one leg along. Then the vision changed, and he was lying on a bed somewhere, and although she could not tell where, yet it seemed as if it must be near the place she first saw him. An old black man was sitting by the bed, and there

was an open fire. The place had a strange look, with the house-walls more like rock than timbers. Here the vision ceased, and she saw nothing more of him or the place.

I asked her what she made out of all this, for it was a long way ahead of my thinking powers. In all my days I had never had to do with visions like these, and they brought no thought of help to my brains.

"I think," she said, "that, as he was on the way home his horse fell, or something happened to him, and that he is now up in the mountain, alive but not able to get away."

Well, I did not know what to say to all that. I was not much disposed to take stock in dreams, and I rather think we are apt to dream about what we think will happen and get this mixed up with what has happened. But I saw very plainly that she believed in that dream, or vision; and as for myself, I had not the heart to say a word; but so far as that is concerned, I do not believe anything I could have said would have shaken her faith in all this. A woman's belief is not like a man's. We want proof of a thing; they do not seem to care a bit *why* they believe it, but just go on believing; and after all I do not know but that they are right more frequently than we men, with our clumsy arguments, and it saves time and trouble.

Night had fallen, but it was not yet quite dark. She said to the girl "Run and pick up some chips, I must cook a little supper." I could see she did not want them around just then, and as she shut the door she took from a barrel that stood behind it a few ears of corn and handed them to me for my horse, and she kind o' laughed—but it was a sort of laugh that hurt me—as she went on: "*He* can eat his raw, *we* have to parch ours." I don't know whether you believe me or not, but as true as you hear me speak she went on to say that she and the children had not had a thing to eat for a week except parched corn and water.

I went out of the house. This was uncomfortable for me. To think of a delicate woman and two little children living on parched corn and water—I suppose I'll have to call it living!

I had a good haversack of eatables. You know a soldier soon learns that his first duty, after obeying orders, of course, is to keep his haversack filled, and I got that thing off the pommel of my saddle and called those children and gave them all of it. I did not dare to trust myself back in the house, but told them to take it to their mother; and added that if they did not eat the last scrap of it then and there, I'd go right off without saying good-bye.

The stars had come out and were shining brightly as camp fires in the sky. Over the

end of the mountain the new moon peered, looking like a bright bit of clear water in a black distance. I thought of home, when I was a little boy and "rode a bag" to mill across this very ridge, that lay so like a shadow in the night; and how I cried because my hands almost froze, and how I stopped under the grape vines to pick the wild grapes, all covered with frost; and then I thought of the road over the mountain, the one she saw Will take in the vision, and all of a sudden an idea flashed over me. I knew that road she had seen him take up the mountain side, just this side of the ridge. Why I did not recognize it from her description of it I can not imagine, unless it was because I was not expecting it. You know we nearly always see what we expect.

I went into the house and told that woman I was under orders to go over the ridge into Culpeper that night. I was ashamed and almost afraid to tell her the truth, that I knew about that road, and so I told her a bit of a fib; I hope to be forgiven for it, for I meant it for the best. I did not wait for that horse of mine to finish his corn, so you may know I was in a hurry, but started for the gap.

It was a good ten miles to the foot of the mountain, but I travelled it before midnight, and I honestly believe my horse knew something of what I was about, for he travelled

like he was going to the stable. I suppose it was towards midnight, when I got to the top of the ridge—I was not noticing so very much—in fact I got to thinking about women and the wonderful ways they have until I really began to believe that they were some strange and superior beings, with ways past finding out by us men. And don't you know, just as I got to the top of the ridge that horse turned into a bridle-path, on the left hand! I declare to you that I was riding with slack rein and really did not know I had come to it. I do not undertake to explain this, all I have to do is to ask you to believe it. I suppose it was a sort of horse-sense the creature had. Any way he turned in, and it was not more than a few hundred yards before I had to get down and lead him, the way was so rough.

I said I was leading the horse, but as a matter of fact I was going where he seemed to want to go, and soon I heard a dog bark, and then about half a dozen ran out barking and howling like I was a thief. I've come to a darkey's house, I said to myself, for nobody but a darkey would ever keep so many dogs, and the poorer they are the more dogs they have. I heard a man's voice, and then another—I knew it at once, there was but one such in the world—it was Will's!

Only one person came out though. He was

an old darkey who had lived over on the Culpeper side of the ridge, and who ran away about the first of the war. I can not stop to tell you about it now; and inside was Will.

Yes, there was Will, with a bad leg, unable to put a foot to the ground, but in good condition, and with one question for me: Had I seen his wife and children? When I told him how I had left them not many hours before, and they were well, I never saw a man look so contented. Not much for contentment to be on top the ridge with a broken leg, in an old darkey's cabin, but he looked happy. The truth is it does not take much to make us happy if we take it right. I have seen a cheerful word do more for some people than half a farm would do for some discontented ones.

Could I get him home? That was the main thing. He thought he could ride my horse, and I was only too willing for this. But we would arrange for this in the morning. I wanted to know how it happened that he was here, hurt, on top the ridge?

So he told me a story so queer that if it had been anybody but Will, I would hardly have believed it. But so it was, and I am sure it was just this way.

He came over the Culpeper side of the mountain without any trouble, but heard that the "Yanks" were out somewhere in the Valley,

just where he was not sure. He was so used to going about among the hills and facing all sorts of adventures that I suppose he was not as careful as he might have been; at all events, just as he started to go down into the valley on the Luray side, he turned a corner in the road and there was a Yankee picket not ten yards away with his gun pointing straight at him. He said something or other in Dutch, or some "furrin" language, any way Will did not understand him or get time to surrender, even if he had that in his mind; though as he said, he had not much notion of surrendering that close to home. But before he had time to even pull out a pistol the "Dutch Yank" banged away at him and the bullet broke Will's leg, cutting the stirrup-leather and he tumbled off just as the horse shied. He did not wait to say a word—the Dutchman of a "Yank"—but banged away like Will was all of Jackson's corps. As luck would have it none of the bullets hit him, and by that time Will had got his hands free, and his revolver out. The Dutchy was working away at his rifle, but it had got stuck some way, and Will said he supposed he was "cussing in Dutch." At all events Will sent a bullet through that part of his head where his brains ought to be, and he never waited to be relieved of picket duty, but quit then and there for good.

But Will heard a bugle blow and horses trotting, and felt sure the enemy would be on him in a minute. The best he could do was to walk and drag his broken leg after him; but it was not so very painful, so he said. He told me that he had once caught a fox in a steel trap, and how the creature gnawed off his foot to get out, and he thought to himself if that fox could do that to get his freedom, surely I can stand this leg. So he managed to drag himself to some bushes, and laid there for a minute watching. Then, too, his heart was full of his wife and children, and his blood was up too, for you know that in a mess like that one does not feel the pain like he does when in bed at home. I knew one of the boys who was shot through the shoulder and did not know he was hurt till somebody saw the blood running down his arm. But no amount of grit will keep a fellow from getting faint when he bleeds; and by the time Will had crawled a few steps farther he just keeled over in a dead faint, and lay there for how long he did not know till afterwards.

Just what scared the "Yanks" he did not know either, but something did, and they moved off as fast as though they thought Old Jack was after them. It might have been that they thought Will was the advance guard; but it is no use guessing about it; and when he did

awake he seemed in a sort of cave, and a good big one, too, lying on a soft bed of straw, and on the other side of the cave was a fire blazing up against the rocky wall, and by the fire sat an old darkey singing to himself, "Possum Up De Gum Tree." He was not sure, he said afterwards, whether he was awake or not, for his head was dizzy, and he seemed like two people; but he felt some how that he was in a safe place, and so he laid still.

Pretty soon the old darkey turned around and he could not help exclaiming: "Joe Williams, by all that's good!"

I'll have to tell you now, so you'll understand, that Joe was a darkey that had run away at the beginning of the war, because he said he was afraid of being sold to Georgia. He did not mind being a slave in Virginia; for he said them that wanted to make their own living and take the risks could be free; but as for him he was not going to do any more work than he could help, and he would take the chance of fooling the master about a day's work, and they could trust him to get plenty to eat. If there was not meat enough at home there was plenty in the neighborhood. So he ran away and hid in the mountains, and his master said he could stay there for his part; he was not worth catching. As for selling him to Georgia, he had too

much pity for those people to send them such a nigger as Joe.

So when he called out old Joe's name, he turned around and came over to where he was lying, and told Will how he had tumbled down just a little way from his den, and he had picked him up, knowing him at sight, and brought him in, and "please de Lawd he wasn't gwine ter let him suffer." He had bound up his leg and managed to stop the blood, and got out from a sort of closet in the rocks a pretty good sized ham, and some sweet potatoes he raked out of the hot ashes, and Will rolled over and ate supper.

The first question Will asked him was if he had heard from his folks in the Valley. But Joe was not disposed to talk much about what was outside of the cave; for he confessed that he did not go out much, leastways not till dark. There were neighbors around, not so very far off, and they had meat houses, and "'twarn't the fashion to lock 'em, and he jis' borrowed suffin' ter eat till he could turn it back ergin." He had some real coffee, too, which he said he got from the "Yanks."

Will asked why he did not go off with the army and be free. But he seemed to have his feelings hurt at that, and did not care to speak about it. Will tried to make him talk on that subject, but the old fellow got mad and said he

had been down in camp last summer, but "dey warn't no fitten comp'ny fur er decent nigger ter 'sociate wid." He went on to tell how, "he was 'gaged ter cook fer er man dey calls majah, en he had one o' dem newfangled things dey calls er cookin' stove, and he had it in de tent, whar 'twas putty warm. En present'y dat man he say 'Teck dat nigger out'n hayar, he 'fends my nostrils.' Yaas, suh, dat's what he say. Call'n' me er nigger! Dat's what he say."

We sat there, Will and I, with old Joe back in the corner, nodding, until way in the midnight. I had told him about his folks, of course, that is the first thing he asked me about, but I did not tell him about the parched corn.

He began to sing—had a lovely voice—"Praise God from whom all blessings flow;" and Joe and I joined in; and there at midnight, away up on the mountain side, about the time of night I suppose the angels were singing over the heads of the shepherds away yonder in the Promised Land, so many hundred years ago, we sat and sang the Doxology; and I, for one, felt every word of it.

So there we sat, planning how to get out to the wagon road and down to the valley the next morning, when that rooster of Joe's began crowing. I looked out the door, thinking it was day, and sure enough it was light, only instead of its being in the East it was due

North, the whole sky full of Northern lights, sometimes like rainbows, then changing quick as a flash to long streamers, then like signal rockets, and at last dying down like a far-off brush pile.

I came in and sat by the fire again, and we talked—Will about his wife and children, I about camp, old Joe about dogs, coons and ghosts. Soon the rooster was crowing again, and this time it was daylight, the first faint change that makes the stars a little pale, though one big one shone so brightly in the far off sky, it looked like it might almost be the one we read about, when shepherds watched their flocks by night.

I was just about to go in again, when I heard a light step behind me. I turned to see what it was, and I do not think I could have been more surprised if the general himself had ridden up; for there was Will's wife with that little blue-eyed girl, and the baby boy in her arms. Well, you talk about ghosts, but if I did not feel my hair rise then you can set the whole of this down as a pure invention. But it was no spirit I saw, but real flesh and blood, the same I had left in the valley last night.

"I knew he was here, I knew it surely, let me go in to him."

"Wait a minute," I said. I slipped inside and picked up old Joe's gun.

"What's the matter?" called out Will; he had no idea of what was going on.

"Oh, I'm just going out to do a little hunting," I said—"come on, old man"—to Joe. And just as I came out I heard a joyful cry—a cry like that you can imagine of a mother whose child is laid out, dead and cold, and all fixed for the grave, if that child should suddenly rise up and throw its arms around its mother's neck, and give her a good hug, such a cry of joy!

It was Christmas, such a Christmas! I believe now I can understand why those angels sang so beautifully that first Christmas so many hundreds of years ago, for they must have felt something like Will's wife felt when she gave that joyful cry—she had found the loved and lost.

The cave was no place for me or Joe either. And I give him credit for building a fire outside, and we stood by the fire and watched the sun come slowly up from over the Eastern slope, and both of us were as happy for Will almost as he was for himself and his little wife and babies.

That's all about Will. Of course, his leg got well, that is well enough to go about, but he was pretty lame, after that, and could never ride a horse again. You see the bone was not set as it should be, though old Joe did the best he could.

I suppose I told his story so often in camp, when I got back—as for Will, of course he could not go back—that after a while I almost began to think it was my own story, and that I was Will. You know you can tell a thing over and over until you can hardly tell whether it is true or not. One night I was sitting by the camp fire, telling over Will Nedmunds's story, when I heard a deep, sweet voice behind me—nobody could ever mistake that voice—and the general touched me on the shoulder and said in his quiet way: "I want you to come up to headquarters and tell me all about Will Nedmunds's Christmas, to-night. It is a very interesting story, and I want some of my friends to hear it."

And I went; and after that I staid at headquarters as a regular orderly.

SAM'S COURTSHIP.

AS for Sam, he was certainly a negro, if utter blackness is any criterion. He was, so to speak, blue-black. One of the boys declared that he tried with a piece of charcoal, and it made a visibly light mark on Sam's sable skin. Whether this be true or only an exaggeration, certainly Sam was invisible at night, and only ascertainable in pitch darkness by a certain subtle odor emanating from his sudoriferous glands, an African 'scent, I believe it has been called.

But he was thoroughly good natured, and I think would have made but a poor fight even in his own defense. I have read that the poor Africans are led off to be sold as slaves in their own country by the more ferocious members of other and more warlike tribes; and if this be true, I am sure Sam would have been one of the captives. A gentle slave, he, and willing and accommodating to a degree past comprehension, except on the ground that he cared nothing for himself, and so was the more willing to do for others. He was about twenty, I should think; and, as the civil war had ended

some years before, Sam was as much of a free-man as his unasserting nature allowed.

He had numberless tricks, of a guileless sort, such as putting a piece of paper on one side of a table-knife and by dexterously turning the blade over make it appear to the children's eyes that he shifted the paper at will to either side of the knife-blade; and of turning a stick in his hands so as to make it come to the top in a very mysterious manner. But the trick which caused the greatest wonderment was one of rolling up his eyes until only the whites were visible, and fixing them in this way to the astonishment and horror of the lookers-on, while some of the older members of his tribe would remonstrate with him and ask the awful question: "Jes' 'spose you wuz struck so?" meaning how awful if the face were suddenly fixed in its new and contorted form. I have wondered sometimes if some of those more than ordinarily hideous faces we see on some of the South Sea Island gods were not copied from the grimaces of some one of the tribe who had Sam's gift of facial contortion. But this is no part of Sam's story, and so I proceed.

Sam had attached himself to me as a sort of body-servant or valet, self-constituted in a measure, for he was what we call in Virginia, a "house-boy," that is, brought up in the house, and trained to wait on the table, and perform

such other services as his position indicated. In all warm weather he brought me cool water, fresh from the spring, for my morning ablutions, his old mammy ordering him into such service with a peremptoriness as only belongs to an old Virginia cook. The kitchen and its desmenes were territory to invade which brought down a storm of wrath that not even "the mistress" cared to invoke. In the cooler weather Sam kindled the fire in my open hearth, his mother ordering this—"Fer, doan' you know, boy, you Marster Jeems 'bleeged ter haf er fier ter git up by: de use ter hit all de lives; en he kotch he death er cole 'dout dat fier."

So Sam brought the water, and made the fire, serving me as a Ferdinand to a Prospero; no Caliban was he, and I am sure never coveting my place or its perquisites.

But laterly I noticed a certain moodiness in Sam, far from his old-time good naturedness. "His countenance fell" several degrees, and while he laughed still, it lacked the spontaneity of old, and Sam was certainly "out of sorts."

One morning he came into my room rather early, and essayed to kindle, as usual, my morning fire. Half asleep I heard him grumbling, a new thing for Sam. "Dis hayar fier woan' bu'n, en dis hayar light'd knot woan' ketch, en de chimbley woan' draw, en de woan' nuttin' 't all do right. Things sudd'nly is corn-

trary, en de all comes plumb tergedder. 'T always is de way; w'en one wucks wrong de all wucks wrong."

A new Shakespeare, I thought, is Sam. "When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions"—we all know the quotation; and here was Sam, who knew not a word of Shakespeare, and who had not even heard of The Bard, having the same idea, in not so far from the same language as William of Avon. Well, I thought, we are much alike, and the classes are not so widely separated after all. But finally "the chimbley drawed" to Sam's satisfaction, and he arose from his knees, and brought in the water. He glanced sheepishly around, looked several times as if he was about to speak, and as suddenly did not; and finally at the door he turned about and with a slight stammer, never noticeable except when greatly embarrassed, called my name. He always called me "Marster Jeems," although, as I said before, he was free by the act of war, the most decisive of all acts, and one seldom appealed from.

"Marster Jeems, kin I speak ter you jes' er minnit?"

"Certainly, Sam, of course; what is, what's the trouble? You've had it on hand for some time."

"How you know dat, Marster Jeems? How

you know dat; anybody been tellin' you anythin'?"

"No, no one has told me a thing, but it don't take much of a doctor to see that you are worried about something. What's the matter?"

"Dat's jes' what I's wantin' ter ax you 'bout," said Sam, turning if possible about two shades darker than before. "Dat's jes' what I wan' ter ax you 'bout. I's in er mighty tangle; I is, en how in de name er Gord I gwine ter git hit onrabbled! Its er wusser tangle 'n sheep-burs in er nigger's wool. I's putty nigh 'stracted, en 'bout ready ter gin it up."

"Well, tell me all about it. Is it 'Manda?"

"Nor, suh, hit ain' dat gal; she's all right. She doan' worry me none. Nor, suh, 'tain' her."

"Well, its a woman, anyhow; I'm quite sure of that."

"How you know dat, Marster Jeems—how you fin' dat out?" said Sam, the slightest suspicion of a grin invading his face. "Like ter know how you fin' dat out. I ain' sayin' nuttin' 'bout no gal," continued he, evidently rather pleased than otherwise that I had divined his secret. "You sutt'nly is knowin', Marster Jeems; 't wuz er woman sho' 'nuff." And Sam actually showed his teeth with much the broadest grin I had seen on his face for days.

"Sit down there, Sam, and tell me all about this."

"Thankee suh, but I doan' keer ter set down. I feels better stannin';" which seemed to be the fact, as he was going through a peculiar set of "motions," I heard him subsequently denominate as the "wriggles."

"Well, just as you prefer. Go on—no, hand me that box of cigars and a match, and I'll smoke while you talk."

"Deed, Marster Jeems, you 's de onliest gentermun I kin meck free ter talk ter. Leastways you done loos'n de string o' my tongue, en I gwine ter tell you de plain troof, en no lies, so he'p me de good Marster.

"You know, Marster Jeems, when you sont me over ter Dr. Miller's wi' dat note ter de doctor lars' spring, I had 'n no mo' notion o' co'tin' en I had er flyin'. Gals wuz jes' gals, dat's all de wuz, en I dances wi' 'em en 'scorts 'em ter chu'ch, en all dat, but I had 'n no mo' notion o' co'tin' 'n you. En w'en I gits over ter Maple Grove en knocks at de front do' I wuz ez innercent ez er baby 'dout any teeth. En w'en de doctor reads de note he steps ter de do', en he say: 'Is you de boy w'at brung dis note; I sutt'nly is 'bleeged ter you.' He talks ter me jes' like I wuz er sho' 'nuff gentermun. En he say, 'I ain' quite done breakfus', en you better step inter de kitchen en git some yo'se'f, ef

you ain' hed none.' Co'se I warn' gwine tell him I hed breakfus', w'en he jes' say I ain' hed none. Dat warn' perlite. En Sam always mecks hit er pint ter eat w'en eatin' place en eatin' time come. So I goes inter de kitchen, en I sees old Polly, w'at cooks fer de doctor, en she say, 'How do, Sam, teck dat cheer.' So I tecks de cheer en 'gins de compliments, en wuz lookin' 'round fer de breakfus', when de dinin' room do' opens, en er gal come out wi' er plate in her han', en she say ter Polly, 'Is you got mo' hot buckwheat cakes?' En Polly say, 'In er minnit, dis griddle need greasin' fus'. En den she say, 'Dis is Mr. Sam Johnson, Miss Turner.'

'I look 'roun' at dat gal she call Miss Turner, en she gigglin' so she let de plate fall out'n her han' mos'. En I say, 'How you do, Miss?' 'Oh, I's fus' rate, how's you?' she say. En I say, 'I's able ter eat my 'lowance.' En she say, 'I specks you is; you got mouf big 'nuff fer two 'lowances.' En dat mecks me feel right easy wi' her, en I up's en tells her I gits de 'lowance eny way, mor'n she I 'specks.

"By dat time de cakes wuz brown on bofe sides, en Polly she say ter dat gal, 'You better run wi' dem cakes while de's right hot off'n de griddle—de ain' fitt'n fer ter eat 'dout de's hot; min', now, mun, you better run.' En dat gal, she cut en run fru' dat dinin' room do', en ez

she dodge in she stick her haid in de crack en say, 'Good-bye, Mr. Sam.' En doan' you know, Marster Jeems, I feels sumfin' crawlin' down my back, jes' like 't wuz hot en cole at de same time.

"Den I says ter Polly: 'What dat gal name?' En she say, 'Miss Turner.' But I say, 'Oh, go 'long, ole woman; w'at's her Chris'mus name?' 'Oh,' she say, 'Ailsie.' 'Fo' de Lawd, suh, when I hayars dat name hit meck me feel right cuyus, fer dat 's de name I done drempt 'bout lars' Sunday night. En I says ter Polly, 'Is you *sho*' dat 's her name?' 'Sutt'nly, o' co'se, you think I gwine lie 'bout de gal's name? You mus' think I's er fool.' 'Nor, I doan', I says, 'but dat de gal I drempt 'bout lars' Sunday night, sho' 's de'f; de ve'y one.' En jes' den de gal pop her haid in de do', en she want mo' buckwheat cakes, en she fotch back er whole passel er cole biskits en cakes, en she say 'she warn' gwine ter let her miss's eat no cole cakes 'n biskits, de warn' wholesome.' En I up 'n say, 'Let me see ef de 's good fer my wholesome.' En she larf en say, 'De 's good 'nuff fer you ef de 's stone cole.' En wi' dat she sot de plate right in my lap, en she tuck de jug en poured er whole lot er 'lasses on top de cakes, en she say, 'Now, stuff yo'se'f, greedy.' But I jes' larfs en say, 'Dese cakes is good, de sutt'nly is.' But Polly say, 'Sam, you got big

mouf, but you cayarnt git one o' dem cakes in it widout doublin' of it up, en it spiles buck-wheat cakes ter double 'em up. Ailsie, fotch Sam er knife en fo'k.' So she fotch me er knife en fo'k, en ez her han' tetch mine, doan' you know I feel dat creepin' down my back, fus' hot en den cole.

"But I eats de cakes, do, spite o' de creepin', en den de calls me en tells me de doctor done writ de arnswer ter de note ter you, en I comes 'long back. Jes' ez I wuz tu'nin' 'roun' de cornder o' de house, I see dat gal Ailsie go by de winder, en I feels dat creepin' 'gin, plain ez kin be.

"De nex' day—doan' you 'member it, Mars-ter Jeems, I ax you doan' you wan' 'nudder note tucken over ter de doctor's, en you say, 'Yes, I b'l'eves I will; no, I won' write no note: you jes' say ter de doctor will he len' me dat mag'zine'—sho'ly you 'members dat—wi' sum-fin' 'bout de cotton states—I dis'member jes' what it wuz. So I goes over ter de doctor's, en de fus' thing I sees wuz dat gal Ailsie, scrubbin' off de front steps. I says, 'Mawnin',' en she say, 'How do, I's rale glad ter see you.' En I feels dat cole en hot creepin' 'gin, jes' ez plain ez kin be. En she say 'De doctor gone erway; he gone ter see er sick lady—you better wait tell he come back.'

"So I goes inter de kitchen, en I sees ole

Polly—she wuz wuckin' 'bout de fierplace—en pres'n'ly dat gal Ailsie comed in, en Polly she say she gwine inter de garden ter git some things fer dinner, en I sot dar, hardly knowin' what I wuz er doin'. En dat gal, she up 'n say, 'You done los' you mouf, ain' you?' So dat start me fer er little, en I say 'I got mouf 'nuff fer you any way.' Den she say, 'I doan' wan' you mouf, I ain' worryin' myse'f 'bout you, boy.' By dat time I ain' keerin' much, so I sot down right 'long side o' her, en we chat erway jes' like we knowed one 'nudder always. Den I hayar de doctor's buggy rattlin' 'roun' by de stable, en I says, I mus' git out'n dis.

" 'Whar you gwine?' she ax me, en I tells her whar, en she say, 'You mus' come ergin, I rale glad ter see you.'

"De ve'y nex' night, arfter I finish waitin' on you, I starts fer de doctor's 'gin, en I meets him at de tu'n o' de lane, en he calls me en ax is I got any message fer him. En I tells him not jes' dis time—I mout have one termorrow. He larfs, en say, 'Better look out, Sam, dat gal fool you.' But I ain' lis'nin' ter dat, en I go 'long ter de hous', en inter de kitchen.

"Ailsie wuz washin' de supper dishes, en Polly wuz foolin' 'roun' de fier, en w'en dat gal see me she say, 'Ef hayar ain' dat Sam 'gin.' En I say, 'Ef hayar ain' dat gal 'gin.'

Den she larf, en Polly larf, en Polly say doan' I wan' go ter chutch, she wuz gwine. En I ax Ailsie wuz she gwine, en she say 'No, she got some sewin' ter do.' So Polly go 'long, en Ailsie she say she b'l'ave she woan' sew, she win' off de hank. En she tuck de hank er yarn en put it on my han's, en she say, 'You better hol' dat hank right, I stick dis knittin' needle in you eye.' So we jaw at one 'nudder fer right long time, en by de time she git de thread all woun' off I wuz gittin' tangle myse'f—dat gal she mos' too much fer me. Onct she gits de thread tangle en she 'tend she tryin' ter ontangle it, but she 'pear'd like she tryin' tangle me mor'n de thread. But we gits 'long right sociable do. So she gits de ball made en she say, 'Oh, I's so ti'ed; ain' you?' 'Nor,' I say, 'I ain' ti'ed, but ef you 's ti'ed I kin hol' you.' But she say, 'Looker hayar, boy, doan' you tetch me.' 'I ain' er tetchin' of you,' I say, but I meck er grab at her han', en I gins it er squeeze, en I say, 'Do dat hu't?' I look on de inside o' de han' en I say, 'I kin read han's; you got er sweetheart.' She jucks her han' erway, en she say, 'S'pose I is, 't ain' none er you business. You better lef' me 'lone.' But I hol's on, en I say, 'I gwine ter cunjer 'im.' En she say, 'You dassent.' 'Yes I is,' I says, jes' foolin' like. En I see she gittin' sort er skeered, en I say, 'Oh, I doan' know nuttin'

'bout cunjerin'—I 'specks Polly do—I wuz jes' foolin'.

"Den she say, 'I knowed er boy w'at got cunjured, en he done gone bline, en lose he fo' senses.' En I say, 'Who?' En she say, 'Nuver mine, I know.' En she say, 'He 'bout you size, en he got big mouf like you, en big foot, too. I know he cayarnt see, 'less he gone home 'fo' dis.'

"Den I see she pokin' fun at me, en I up 'n say, 'Looker hayar, gal, fus' thing you know I'll knock you.' En she say, 'What you do wi' all de peoples you knocks?' En she larfs, en I larfs, en we wuz good friends ergin. So I gits 'long side o' her ergin, on de bench, en she fotch me some water in de go'rd, en I tells her I drink out'n de same side ez she drinks, en hit mecks us pardners. So we sets down ergin, en I tecks hol' er her han', en I say, 'Ailsie?'

"But she say, 'I Miss Turner.' "'Deed,' I says, 'I ain' gwine call you no Miss. I call you by you Chris'mus name much ez I please. You calls me Sam.' So I squeeze her han' er leetle en I ax, 'Do dat hu't?' 'Not much,' she say, en she try ter pull de han' erway, but I hol' on tight en fars', en I say, 'I gwine git me er sweetheart.' She say, 'Who?' En I say, 'You.' Den she say, 'You got no business foolin' dis way.' 'No, indeedy, I ain' foolin',' I says, 'I's downright earnes'.' She say, 'I b'l'eves you is

foolin'.' 'Deed en double 'deed,' I say, 'I ain'—I's in sho' 'nuff earne'.' 'I got gre't min' ter b'l'eve you jes' er little,' she say, en she roll her eye up at me en lean over my way some, en den I know I got her sho'. En den I say, 'Is you sho' *you* ain' foolin'?' 'Not less'n you is,' she say. So dat settles de matter, en pres'n'ly she say, 'You got ter git me er ring.' 'Deed,' I say, 'I doan' know so much 'bout dat; rings is bindin'.'

"Deed,' she say, 'I ain' gwine do er thing 'dout er ring.' So I had ter promise her de ring. En jes' den I hayar er shufflin' at de do', en ole Polly comed in, en mos' cotch me tryin' ter kiss dat gal. I jumps up en sot on de bench, fur 'way f'm Ailsie ez I could, but Polly she say, 'You all look mighty cool settin' dar, but I been watchin' you fru' de winder fer I doan' know how long, en I gwine tell de doctor en you Marster Jeems too, dat I is.'

"But I say 'I doan' keer who you tells,' en Ailsie, she jes' larfs, but she foller me out ter de gate, en I say, 'W'en you wan' git married?' But she say, 'I ain' studyin' 'bout gittin' married—hit ain' time; 'sides I hayar Polly say 't wuz bad luck ter git married on de dark o' de moon.' 'Well, de moon change,' says I. 'Yaas, en you change too, by dat,' she say. So we jaw at one 'nudder erwhile en den she goes in, en I comes 'long home. But all de way comin'

I feels dat creepin' up my back. Den I 'gins ter think I's cunjured dat meck dat quar feelin', but I gits home all right, en goes ter sleep en sleeps tell day.

"Dat day de comes er boy over hayar f'm de doctor's wi' er note f'm dat gal, Ailsie—she kin write putty good—but de writin' wuz mos' too much fer me, so I cayars hit over ter de sto', en gits dat boy w'at stay at de sto' ter read her fer me, en he read hit sumfin' like dis:

" 'Mr. Sam Johnson: I done change my mine 'bout w'at I wuz sayin' lars' night. I got er sweetheart over de ribber, en I done sont fer him ter come back.'

"Well, ef dat did 'n knock me. I ax dat boy, 'Is you *sho*' dat w'at writ' in dat letter?' en he say, 'Co'se 't is, you s'pose I kin read w'at *ain*' in de letter. S'pose you try ter read her yo'se'f!' But I say, 'Nor, I cayarnt read dat sort o' writin'.' So I puts de paper in my pocket en comes 'long home, en I feels mighty sheepish 'bout hit, I kin tell you. I thinks I sells myse'f fer er quarter 'bout den.

"So I stays 'roun' de house right cornstant, en I keeps erway f'm de doctor's, en I sutt'nly is glad de warn' no errunts ter run over dat erway, ner notes ter be taken, fer I doan' see how I gwine face dat gal. Sometimes I thinks I's ready ter go right over dar en ax her 'bout hit, but den my sperits fails me en I doan' do

nuttin' 't all. But I sutt'nly is bodered 'bout hit, fer I keers fer dat gal right hones', en fer er fac'.

"I sees ole Polly de oder day ez I wuz comin' f'm de pos' offis', en she say, 'You done quit comin' over our way.' En I up 'n tells her a lie, en says I done got 'ligion, en quit runnin' 'roun'. En she say, 'T wuz poor sort er 'ligion dat meck me teck ter foolin' gals.' But I say, 'I ain' foolin' no gals,' en I comes right 'long home. I's 'feard o' dat ole woman enny how, fer I 'gin ter 'speck she done put some cunjer stuff in dat buckwheat en 'lasses, jes' fer debilment, fer ef I ain' conjured I doan' know w'at's de marter. Hits been mos' two weeks now, en I ain' 'joyed myse'f wi' nuttin' 't all. Eatin' doan' tas' good, sleepin' 's all right, but I dreamin' 'bout dat gal mos' de time.

"Marster Jeems, I doan' know w'at you white folks do when gals treat you dat way, but Sam's de mos' disheartenest boy gwine. I 'specks I better show you de letter dat boy brunged me, en see ef you kin read hit enny oder way den dat sto' boy, fer I mistrus' dat boy foolin' wi' me, but I ain' sho'. Dese gals is mons' 'ceitful, en so is sto' boys, en I gittin' so now I mos' 'feard ter trus' myse'f.

"Oh, hayar dat note now. I gits hit all mash up in my pocket so I thunk it wuz er ole rag. Marster Jeems, woan' you try ter read

her fer me, en see ef you kin read her enny oder way den de way dat boy reads her. Tell me hones' trufe, fer I 's mos' 'stracted, 'deed I is."

I unfolded the dreadful note and with much difficulty decyphered the following:

"misTer SaM JoHnsOn,

DeaR Sam,

I am a Goin' Ter de Sto' Dis EaVininG, en Will you PleaSe Be ThaR en git Me That WriNg, fEr I wantS eve'Body Ter kNow I 's 'Guaged teR be MaRRy.

Yo' AilSie.

P-s.—Ef You AiN' got de MuNNY Ter git HiT, I kin giT trus'ed, ez de KnowS me aT de Sto.'

AilSie."

THE STORY OF A VIOLET.

THE warm sun of an April day was shining down on the sloping bank of the South lawn. A cloud came and went, and a shower fell, and the sun came out again warmly and brightly; and as the sun looked over the edge of the bright cloud that was sailing away into the far East, he said to himself:

“When I was stepping over the equator last fall I saw a violet seed fall on that lawn, down there by those trees. I’ve a mind to wake it up; it has slept since last September.”

So the sun poured down his warmest rays on the sloping lawn bank, just where the stream runs at its foot—poured down his warm rays till the frogs in the mud set up a livelier croaking than they had croaked for half a year—poured down his hot rays till the little fishes started up and said it’s time to find out where all this water comes from.

The sun shone and shone until the ground grew steaming warm and the grass turned some shades greener, and the trees stretched out their limbs to catch the warmth, and the violet seed waked up from its long winter slumber. It was

only half awake at first, and it wondered what was the matter, for it was only a seed, and had not even sprouted as yet. So it turned sleepily half over and saw the sun shining so brightly and cheerily, and heard the frogs croak and the fishes splash as they swam up the stream, and it knew by the instinct that violets have that growing time had come.

"Time to wake up and grow," said the sun; "time to wake up and spread your leaves," said the shower; "time to wake up and start your blossoms," said the soft South wind. And so the violet seed stretched out a little root downward, and a little stem upward, and as that was a good day's work for it, it slept soundly all night.

But early the next morning it heard the sun's voice calling: "Wake up and grow! wake up and grow!" and so that day it grew two new shoots, and started three new roots, and sent the oldest shoot clean above the ground. The bright light of the warm day shone through and through the pale stem, turning it a beautiful green, and a tiny leaf began to spread itself above the short grass.

It was tired now, and rested, and the sun went down, and a cloud came up in the West and sprinkled all the grassy lawn. And all night long the frogs chattered and the fishes splashed, and the stream gurgled; and early the

next morning the sun peeped over the cloud's edge to see how things were coming on.

"So, so, I see you're stirring; that's right. I'll give you some of my warmth and light. You can have it half the time, and later on I'll give you more still."

And that day the violet grew three more roots, and started two new leaves, and most wonderful and delightful of all, a tiny blue bud started right out of its heart and reached its head up toward the sky. And the sun went down and the dew fell, and the frogs chattered, and the fishes splashed and swam farther up the stream, and the violet slept.

Early the next morning the sun was up in the East, and no clouds to hide his face. And he looked down on the sloping, grassy lawn, and saw the violet still asleep, for it was tired out with its long day's work. Higher and higher climbed the sun over the tree tops, and the little violet bud opened its blue petals and looked as fresh and fragrant and clean as the newest made violet could possibly look when sprinkled with the purest of morning dew. And the sun went behind a little cloud that had gold edges and a silver fringe, and the violet raised its head high above the grass and looked around for the sun, and wondered where he had gone.

And just then the little cloud with the gold edges and silver fringe slipped away from the

sun's face, and the most dazzling of his rays shone right into the violet's eyes. And she winked and blinked, and at last hung her head away down on her bosom; and oh! dear, she strained her neck so in bending it down that from that day to this all the violets of her family have crooked necks, and are trying to hide their faces in their leaves.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

A STORY of Jack and Nan, with 'Liza and Flo'—only these four, and what they found, is to be told. Jack was seven and Nan, being Jack's twin sister, was obliged to be the same age as Jack himself. 'Liza was the big, fat, black nurse and Flo' was a great St. Bernard dog, the companion and play-mate of the twins. And all these lived together in the great house, or wandered and played about the fields, children of nature, and happy all the day. Jack insisted that he was the elder of the two, possibly claiming this as he was a boy and foremost in all play and mischief too. Both were the special pets of 'Liza and Flo', and of the mother and father of the twins, and the only children in the house, they being seven years old. 'Liza was very fat and very black; Flo' was big and serious-looking, and both these seemed to think the care of the twins their elected duty. Whether they, the twins, loved 'Liza or Flo' most it was hard to say, but all together they were a happy set, living in the great big old Virginia house.

Such an old house to be sure ! with great wide

halls, big enough to drive a load of hay through, and all sorts of queer rooms up and down and on every side with doors in the most unexpected places, and the most wonderful cuddy-holes for hiding; and on the South side, where the warm winter's sun shone in, Jack and Nan slept, 'Liza near by, with Flo' curled up in a den just outside.

What children of nature to be sure! I have not a doubt but they believed every word 'Liza told them; and she related the most wonderful stories of ghosts and hobgoblins, of fairies and "sperrits," they listening awe-struck, not daring to look behind them for fear, yet would not have 'Liza stop the telling for the world. Flo' looked on very grave and wise indeed, wagging her tail in approval, and understanding it all, so Jack insisted, only she lacked words to express the same.

A very happy four indeed, with papa and mamma overlooking all, and sometimes telling Christmas stories too, for it was Christmas Eve at dark. Yes, dark had come. Jack and Nan had romped and played on the lawn, down by the spring, and both had had supper and were resolutely fighting the "Sand Man," who was weighing down their eyelids, they meantime protesting that they were not sleepy, no, not a bit; and 'Liza told again her Christmas story, the most wonderful of them all, a story

told by her at least once a month ever since the twins could recollect, but which still had to them all the freshness of the "first time."

It was such a warm Christmas too, for although there was a fire on the hearth, the windows were open, and the soft South wind came in almost like a spring day. Down by the marsh the frogs were croaking and even some of the birds that went away Southward in the fall still remained and were chirping in the bushes. The only light in the room came from the fire in the open fireplace, and 'Liza told again her wonderful Christmas story, just as she was told it by her mammy, a long time ago.

A story of how just at midnight on Christmas Eve the roosters began to crow:

"Good cheer to you-o-o!" and away across on the next plantation the roosters would answer back: "A Christmas Mawnin-n-n." Meanwhile the oxen in their stalls fell on their knees in thankful worship, and even the birds asleep in the trees waked up and twittered and sang and chirped rejoicingly.

All of which 'Liza told as solemnly as a sermon, and "deeded" to the truth of every word; telling it in half whispers, not as something she had herself seen and heard, but as told her by her old mammy long, long ago.

Told it further thus:

That just at midnight on Christmas Eve, if one went to the top of the hill by the big road and listened he might hear the wailing cry of a baby, newly born, whether on the earth or up in the sky no one could tell—a strange, unearthly cry—a baby cry. But only people could hear it who had led lives as pure and innocent as a baby. She, 'Liza, had gone up and listened, but she s'posed she was too wicked to hear it; but her mammy told her it could certainly be heard, just at midnight.

Now comes the mother with a lamp, and Jack and Nan go to bed, with "Now I lay me down to sleep," said in a droning tone. But somehow they could not sleep. The mother was filling stockings by the fireplace in the dining room, the father was reading, Flo' was snoring—"just like a man" Jack said she snored—'Liza snoring in her room adjoining the nursery. Jack and Nan talked in half-whispers.

"You b'l'ever that story o' 'Liza's 'bout the cryin' baby, Nan?"

"Co'se. They's lots o' things we aint nuver foun' out. She said her mammy tole 'er, 'n what she tell it fer ef 't warnt so?"

"S'pose we go see, Nan," said Jack.

"Aint you 'feared?" replied Nan.

"'Feared, no! you aint 'feared of er baby, is you?"

"No, but it's dark, Jack."

"Dark! why the stars is jes' blazin': should 'n wonder ef one was the Star o' Bethlehem. Le's go."

Shyly Nan crept out of bed. Jack pushed up the long sash and looked out. "It's warm as summer; we can go just so." "Just so," meaning barefoot and in night-dresses, but these children of the South were used to barefeet, and cried when they had to put on shoes.

Flo' waked up and sniffed the air coming from the window, roused herself, yawned, went to the window and followed. She was saying to herself: "They are doing very bad, these twins, going out in the night. I must go with them."

Hand in hand up the path to the top of the hill ran the twins, Flo' gravely following.

"There's the gate, Nan," cried Jack.

"There's the big road, brudder," replied Nan.

How brightly the stars shone. They sparkled and danced, so Nan thought, and she said that the glass in the windows had just been washed clean; and one bright star slipped out of its place and went sailing away, away, down, down, down, leaving a bright track—"O-o," cried Nan, "it's prettier than fireworks."

"Now, Jack, it's time ter liss'n." I think she was growing nervous, and ready to hear the veritable "Gloria in Excelsis."

"I 'clare I did hear sumfin'—didn't you, brudder?"

Jack was nervous too. Only these two, alone in the middle of the night, only these two, with Flo'.

"What you hear, Nan?"

"It sounded sumfin' like a real baby."

"Sho' 'nuff?"

"Sho' 'nuff, Jack."

"Let's run home, Jack."

"No, maybe it's not right to run just now."

Flo' pricked her ears and listened, as if she too heard something, and made a little sound in her throat, half bark, half growl.

"What is it, Flo'?"

Flo' walked to the fence-corner, growled, whined, seemed puzzled: "It aint a 'possum," she said to herself. She walked back to the twins, and back again to the fence-corner, smelt at something there which *she* saw but which Jack and Nan could not, and then gave a little joyful bark.

"Let's go and see, Nan," said Jack.

"I'm 'feared," replied Nan.

"I'm not," said Jack, although his voice did not sound very brave. Flo' was snuffing at a bundle lying in the fence-corner. The bundle cried, a baby's wailing cry.

Jack walked boldly up, Nan following falteringly.

Wonder of wonders to them ! "A baby, a real meat baby," shouted Nan, and the baby lifted up its voice and wept as only wailing, helpless infancy can.

"Oh, Jack, it's a little Jesus, a real live Jesus, come to us on a Christmus mawnin'."

Jack looked around for Flo', but she was gone. And now all over the dark house lights gleamed and voices called for the children, and Flo' trotted in while 'Liza was loudly lamenting the loss of her charge.

For the father and mother had gone to look at the children asleep, as they supposed, and to hang up the stockings, and the nest was empty !

Flo' pulled at the mother's dress.

"She knows something," said the father—"What is it, Flo' ?"

Flo' pulled, walked to the door, came back, pulled again at the dress, whined and looked at the open door.

"Let us follow her," said the father, and the sound of rapid feet was heard over the path leading up the hill, Flo' leading, joyfully barking.

No mother or father ever before saw such a sight on a Christmas Eve. It quite exceeded 'Liza's mother's fancy. Nan was holding the baby, the baby was crying, Jack looking very superior and "touchous" about handling it,

while Nan was jumping up and down, barefoot, and in her night-gown, shouting:

‘It’s a little Jesus; we found it in the fence-cornerder, me ’n Flo’ ’n Jack—a real live Jesus, aint you glad ’Liza?’

Whose baby it was no one of the family ever knew. Whether some heartless mother had abandoned it, or some dead mother’s friends had put it by the road-side, hoping and praying for a home and friends for it—neither the father nor mother of the twins ever knew, or these infants themselves; no, not even ’Liza or Flo’, although the latter looked very wise about it, as if she could tell much if she would; and ’Liza made many guesses which she told over and over until she came to believe them, in part at least.

So it was. There was a new baby in the house, a wonderful baby with big blue eyes and golden hair, all the more wonderful for its strange coming. And the father and mother of the twins found it, I verily believe, as great a joy to them as if it were their own flesh and blood.

And it lived and grew and became a strong man. And do I know him?

No, no, I only dreamed him out as I sat here by the fire.

DE PROFUNDIS.

IT was, indeed, out of the depths that we came, and this mainly by the help of our dear friends, who were our slaves, but none the less friends, sticking close in adversity. And mine is but a prologue, for I only wish to say that I am trying to tell, in as exact language as I can, the story of Peggy and of Dan. I enlisted early in the spring of 1861 in the ——th Virginia regiment, was elected captain of my company, participated in the battles of Manassas, and also in what is known as the “seven day’s fights” about Richmond, was captured very soon after, taken to Johnson’s Island, exchanged and returned to Virginia in the latter part of the year 1862.

I left my dear wife almost at the church-door, we having been married in the spring of 1861, and although I had a week or two leave of absence, we had but a brief honeymoon, as the regiment was ordered to the front and I saw nothing of my bride, after our marriage, except a short stolen visit or two, until I returned from the North as an exchanged prisoner. While in prison I had a few lines from a cousin of hers residing in the city of Baltimore, giving news she had received from my people, and this was

the only tidings I had from home during my absence.

I shall not attempt to tell of my sufferings of body and of mind, while away from my dear wife, or of the desperation with which I struggled not to give up hope, situated as I was absolutely without comfort of soul, unless, indeed, the dull hope which never utterly forsakes a sane man, and which even the shadow of death can hardly completely stamp out.

I came back badly shattered in body, but needing mostly the blessed nursing I was sure to receive at home. And now I leave the rest of the story, painful enough in some respects, to the telling of the faithful couple but for whose tender care the one light that shone for me would have gone out in darkness.

I have tried to put down the words of Peggy and Dan as exactly as possible, but realize that it is impossible to put in words alone the story of the sacrifices they made for my dear ones, and the devotion they displayed; and I can only pray God that they may never lack for friends as faithful and true as they proved to me and mine in our hour of extremity. I know that so long as my wife and myself live and can help them they will never want.

PEGGY'S STORY.

“Settin’ hayar, honey, settin’ hayar, lookin’

at you ez you be playin' in de shade, wi' yo' cotton-haid hayar en yo' blue eyes, hit seems ter me I kin shet my eyes en go back ter de days w'en yo' ma wuz er leetle thing like you, playin' 'roun' on de lawn wi' yo' pa. He wuz er boy 'bout Dan's size—mout be er leetle bigger, en he wuz in all de mischievment de wuz gwine on—yo' pa. He wuz yo' ma's cousin, 'bout third er fo'th, en wuz dark complected, wi' dark eyes. Yo' ma wuz borned en raise' on dis place whar we livin' now. O' co'se de ole place whar yo' pa wuz borned, en you too, wuz bu'nt down by de so'gers en dat Henshaw man, endurin' o' de wah. En now I tellin' you 'bout yo' pa, en w'at he like, jes' like you ain' nuver seed 'im, en you settin' on he lap dis ve'y mawnin'. He uster come over hayar ter de ole place ter go ter school ter ole Mr. Montague—he ke'p de school—en yo' pa wuz in all de mischief de wuz gwine on, de leader in hit all. He so sprightly en strong he boun' ter be at de haid—haid o' all: studyin' en play en all. But he warn' mean do; nor, suh, he nuver 'pose on chill'ns ner gals, en I 'member onct he gin er big boy er awful whalin' 'kase he teck er apple erway f'm leetle Jimmy Bledsoe, en po' leetle Jim he crippled at dat! En I know dat boy—yo' pa I means—teck dat Bledsoe boy en cayar 'im all de way home on he back w'en de fergit ter fetch de hoss fer 'im ter teck 'im home. De

warn' none er dem free schools den, en ed de had been none o' dese chill'ns would er been 'lowed ter go ter mix up wi' dem common po' white peoples w'at sont de brats dar.

"Yo' ma wuz jes' like er bird—yaas, er blue-bird, wi' her singin' voice, en you could hayer her all over de plantation 'mos', sometimes up in de cherry-tree, sometimes on de haystack, down by de run, wadin' bar'foot in de shaller places, but always de same bright, laughin', free chile, wi' nuttin' but gladness en sunshine fer all. Seemed like dat chile could 'n have trouble, but de good Lawd, he sont hit all de same, plenty o' hit, 'fo' she got th'ugh. But she comed out'n hit like de Hebrew chill'ns out'n de fier, mo' like er angel den ever. She woan' let me say dat ter her face, fer she say she only er po', sinful mortal, w'at tryin' ter do her duty in de state she called ter, but now she erway I boun' tell you 'bout her.

"W'en she wuz sixteen I wuz er year older, en she 'gun ter put up her hayar—it gittin' darker den, en fall down mos' ter her foots, en she put on long dresses, en her eyes gittin' deeper en deeper, like de at de bottom o' de well, en her face like de sunshine mo'n ever—Lawd, mun! she wuz er picter.

"Now, chile, doan' you git proud 'kase I's sayin' you like yo' ma—co'se you is, but you mus' 'n persume on dat. De good Lawd, he

kin give en he kin teck 'way, so den you mus' 'n think too much o' yo'se'f, 'kase you like yo' ma. En den chile, I doan' know but w'at you like yo' daddy too; en ef you like bofe o' 'em you boun' ter be good en purty too.

“How I is ramblin' ter be sho' ! I wuz gwine tell 'bout yo' pa en yo' ma en 'bout de weddin', en w'en I gits ter talkin' 'bout de ole times I fergits whar I is er w'at I doin' mos'. De ole days w'en yo' ma would run bar-foot, 'kase de boys do so, en how she sot her foot on er locus' thorn en yo' pa picks her up en cayars her in de house—en doan' you know, w'en yo' ma—no, 't wuz yo' gran'ma—start ter pick hit out, she cry en say, 'Johnny Temple, he pick hit out,' en yo' gran'ma larfs en say: 'So dat's de way you 'gins de marter, en who knows how you een it.' John, he big, clumsy boy, he picks hit out, but he han' shake, en yo' ma say, 'Oh, you awkward !'

“De run out en play onder de trees, en he git stung wi' er hornet, en hit sudd'nly do hu't, en yo' ma say she hayar o' er man w'at got shot wi' er pizen bow 'n arrer, en he wife er he sweetheart, she suck de place en git all de pizen out, en woan' he let her suck he han' en git out de pizen ? But he say no, hit mout pizen her, en den w'at he gwine do fer er wife w'en de grow up ? Dat de way de cayar on, en de min' me o' one o' dem leetle whurwin's dat

come 'long down de road, stirrin' up de dus', en bimeby er big one come en twis' off de tree-tops en teck off de roof o' de house.

"But w'en he sayin' dat 'bout she bein' he wife one o' dem days she say she ain' gwine marry nobody—she gwine tu'n Catherlic en be er sister, like her arnt Sue. But he arnswer her back dat dem blue eyes warn' made ter be shet up in er convent—de made ter light some man's life: en how she gwine change her 'ligion, en she er 'Piskerpalian? So de jaw at one 'nudder erwhile like de sort o' quoilin', en den meck up.

"De wuz plenty er gentermuns come 'roun' in dem days—dat is, arfter yo' ma she grow up, do she warn' mo'n sixteen w'en de 'gin ter come; no, not mo'n fifteen er risin' er dat. Some o' 'em say de come huntin' foxes, but I think de huntin' yo' ma, fer de stick mighty clost ter her anyway. Lawd, but 't wuz er sight ter see 'em waitin' on her, she lookin' kinder like she doan' keer, only she 'bleeged ter be nice ter 'em all. Yo' gran'ma, she wuz de lady o' de house, en er gran' one she made too. 'T wuz er sight ter see her comin' inter de dinin' room, holin' yo' gran'pa's arm, en lookin' ez smilin' ez er spring mawnin'. 'Tain' no use, honey, but de wuz gran' peoples in dem days—peoples w'at knowed de place, en had de place ter know. I kin see yo' gran'pa now, out ter de cayarge, he'pin' de ladies out—he

wi' he gran' manners en all. Ah ! de ole times done gone, en de ole peoples, en hit seems now like de warn' much diff'unce 'tween de middle peoples en de quality. De thinks 'kase de got some money en lan' *dat* mecks 'em 'spectable, but Lawd, honey, hit tecks de rale blood—en yo' ma—*dat* is, yo' gran'ma, de had de blood sho', en all de kinfo'ks too. W'en you ever hayar o' er Temple doin' anythin' mean, er gwine ter de dawgs—'sep'n dat ornery man, Bill Henshaw—he er sort o' cousin, but Lawd, chile, ef ever dat man had any o' de Temple blood in 'im he mus' er cut hisse'f wi' er knife en let hit out, he so mean.

“Yaas, de come 'roun', lots er gentermuns, f'm fer en near, en de all co'tin' yo' ma. But yo' pa he had de start en he kep' hit too. 'Kase 't wuz 'pinted sho', en den he wuz de bes' man o' de whole set. En ef de wuz one de wuz twenty. De wuz comin' all de time, en de pester de po' chile so she ain' had time mos' ter eat. But she look like she ain' keerin' fer none o' 'em, only she boun' ter let yo' pa have de mos' o' her, fer she doan' jes' know how ter meck b'l'eve like some er dem gals dat fools mens so. I see one o' de gentermuns git her off in de cornder whisperin' ter her, en she look sort o' shy en den larf er bit, en cut her eye at 'im, en den de fus' thing you know she run en put her arm 'roun' her ma's naick en

look like she mos' cry, en w'en de miss's ax her w'at de marter she say she doan' wan' no beau, 'sep'n de teck long time ter do de waitin', en she ain' sho' she wan' any—en den she sort er whisper ter her ma in her year, she wait tell de right man comes 'long en den she'll think 'bout hit. En she, po' chile, she doan' know hit, but de right man all de time waitin' at de nex' tu'n o' de road.

“She wuz leetle bit er thing den, jes' like she is now, only she mo' fleshy now o' co'se, but den she slim ez er willer switch, but de harnsomes' eyes—why de look sof' en pleadin' like de wil' bird w'en you kotch hit in yo' han', en w'en she look sideways at you, you mos' think dem eyes talkin'—yaas, I do think she could meck 'em speak, en I *know* yo' pa onderstan' w'at de say, same ez she say hit out loud; but she could larf wi' 'em too.

“(Tu'n yo' haid 'roun' honey, en lef ole Peggy see ef *you* kin larf out'n *yo'* eyes. Yaas, de same ez yo' ma, only de ain' quite so sof'. Now doan' you git sot up, fer de good Lawd, he gin you w'at you got, en he kin teck hit all erway, jes' like he did fer Miss Jane Sale, w'at had de smallpox, en all her beauty done clean gone.) She larfs wi' dem eyes, yo' ma, en she could tanterlize de mens wi' 'em too, w'en she teck de notion—tanterlize 'em so de look at one 'nudder like de wonder w'at she do mean. But

dat's de way wi' de wimmens; de Lawd, he meck 'em so, en hit's de 'tection I 'specks.

"Ole Cunnel Harrison, he comed 'roun', too, co'tin'. He wuz er widderer wi' th'ee er fo' sons, some o' 'em growed up, but de cunnel he meck b'l'eve he rale young, en he comb he hayar over de bald place on de top o' he haid, en he mighty perlite en gracious ter we-alls; en he teck off he hat en bow in gran' style. But one day I see yo' ma she sot on havin' some fun en she say ter de cunnel woan' he please thread her needle fer her. He say, 'Sutt'nly, Miss,' en he teck de thread en he poke en poke at de needle-eye—he shame ter teck he specks, he 'ten' he so young—den he teck de needle ter de winder en hole it up ter de light en den he git rale mad en say, 'You got no business ter do dat way, Miss—dat needle got de eye broke off.' En you min' she cut her eye at me en say, jes' ez quiet ez you please: 'You mus' 'scuse me, cunnel, but mebbe I did 'n look at hit.' But she ain' lookin' at 'im w'en she say dat—she lookin' at de een o' her leetle finger en talkin' ter dat. Oh, she could worry 'em plenty w'en she got ready, but she nuver worry yo' pa, she love 'im too much fer dat.

"Sho', yo' pa wuz de man. De oders de come en de go, fus' one en den 'nudder, den er whole passel o' 'em tergerer, comin' en gwine en hangin' 'roun', en dat Mr. Bill Henshaw he

come mo'n de oders, 'sep'n yo' pa, 'kase he could ride 'cross de fiel' any time, de plantations so nigh. Somehow yo' pa he 'pear'd ter know jes' w'en ter walk, fer hit of'en happen he meet yo' ma down by de run whar de bridge uster be. Hit done wash erway now—en de bofe walk like 't wuz er 'pintment de had, one o' dem de in er hurry ter keep en slow ter quit, en w'at de say I doan' know, but de look mighty satisfied comin' 'long up de lane, walkin' like de sho' o' dese'ves, en ain' keerin' ef de doan' git home in time fer supper.

“But de trouble wuz comin'. De Lawd, he 'pinted hit, en hit had ter come. One day—'t wuz t'wuds evenin', en de wuz er cloud risin', en yo' gran'ma say ter me: 'Run, Peggy, wi' de umbreller, en meet Miss Sophie, it looks like er shower.' O' co'se I know de way she gone—she always go down by de bridge—en dat man Henshaw he knowed it too, en dat wuz de 'ginnin' o' de misery. Jes' why yo' pa wuz late dat day I doan' know, 'sep' 't wuz 'pinted by de Lawd, but he warn' dar, en dat man Henshaw wuz. I 'specks he'd been drinkin'—I doan' think he'd dar ter go on dater way 'dout he drunk, leastways in liquor, he *mus'* be sho', er he would nuver do like he done dat evenin'.

“Miss Sophie, yo' ma—she wuz dar on de seat yo' pa made fer her, lookin' down in de run,

watchin' de minners swimmin' 'roun' en singin' sorf ter herse'f, en w'en she hayar er step she think hit mout be yo' pa, en w'en she look dar stan' dat man Henshaw. You know honey, she jes' natchelly hate dat man, but o' co'se she treat 'im like er lady ought ter—she always keep de bes' manners fer all erlike—so she say, 'Good evenin'.' He say, 'You lookin' fer sumfin'?' She sort o' larf en say 't wuz mos' time fer de flowers ter be bloomin'. She jes' say dat fer ter be sayin' sumfin'. But he say he know w'at she lookin' fer—but dat man ain' hayar en he is, en now he gwine say he say. She look 'roun' like she skeered, but he say, 'Oh, you need 'n look, he ain' hayar en he ain' comin', en now I got you whar I want you I gwine say w'at I please.' Den he went on tellin' her how *he* love her en he gwine meck her marry 'im, en—well, he jes' went on scandalous, 'kase he jes' drunk 'nuff not ter keer; en she look like she faint, she so skeered. En dat bad man he grab her 'roun' de wais' en gwine on dat way—'t wuz turrible, en I wuz meckin' up my mine ter hit 'im wi' dat umbreller w'en I hayar er swif' step. She hayar hit too, en scream out, 'John! John!' En dar de wuz!

"Mr. Henshaw he done drapt her on de grars, en dar she laid like she daid 'mos' en he bris'lr up like one o' dem dawgs you see dat's 'feard ter fight, but jes' growls, en he say, 'Well!'

Yo' pa he say two er th'ee cuss-wuds, en den I see him teck dat Henshaw man en pitch 'im right down over de bridge inter de run, en he walk off wi'out lookin' behin' 'im ter see whedder he drowneded er no. I see 'im crawl out'n de water en shake he fis' at yo' pa, en he say: 'Hit's yo' time now: mine'll come some day.' En den he sneak off like er whipt houn' dawg.

"Yo' pa pick up yo' ma f'm de groun' whar dat man drap her, en teck her in he arms—he so strong en she so light she warn' mo'n er bun'le er fodder ter 'im, en tote her 'long 'twuds de house, en presen'ly she 'gun ter come to, en she sort o' cry sorf like, but she layin' dar lookin' mighty contented in he arms, en I hayar 'im say he gwine be her 'tecter tell def' do 'em part. En you know, mun, she ain' sayin' no, not wunct. But arfter erwhile she say he mus' put her down, fer somebody mout be comin' en den she'd be so 'shame, but he—well, he doan' look like he 'shame now ner ain' gwine ter nudder. But he put her down on de groun' en she hafter hol' on ter 'im—he say he 'feard she fall, so he put he arm 'roun' her wais', en I teck notice she ain' henderin' 'im.

"Mr. Henshaw, he go off ter de cote en say he gwine have yo' pa 'rested fer 'saultin' o' 'im, but he warn' gwine do nuttin' 't all, en

w'en he git sober en gits well o' de cole he cotch f'm de sousin' in de run he went clean out'n de county 'n did 'n nobody see 'im fer er long time.

“Den de wah comed. Yo' pa wuz de cap'n, you know he 'bleeged ter git dat, ef no mo', en he sutt'nly did look gran' ridin' he hoss at de haid o' de comp'ny; en de wuz drillin' en marchin' en gre't doin's. Den de say de gwine off ter fight de Yankees.

“So de mus' have de weddin'. Yo' gran'ma she say de ought ter have er big weddin' like 't wuz w'en she wuz married, but yo' gran'pa say, no, de bes' wuz de simples', dat de country need all de men en all de money en all de wimmens too, fer 't wuz er life en death fight, en he knowed hit. Some o' de gentermuns de say de warn' gwine ter be no fightin'—de Yankees run soon ez de see de cavalry, but he say no, de'd be blood en fier 'fo' de done wi' wah; en he wuz right too—fer we see de fier right hayar, en de blood too, en sech tribulations ez I prays de good Lawd not ter sen' no mo' on we-alls.

“So de had de weddin', jes' quiet like, wi' no fine dresses en no gre't doin's, en yo' pa say he mus' go right off—de comp'ny done gone—en I do b'l' eve he thought hit wuz he duty ter ride right off en leave yo' ma at de chutch do.' But de cunnel say de Bible 'low er man wi' er new

wife er whole year, en he thinks yo' pa mus' stay er leetle while ter comfort he bride. So he stays er week er so.

“(Stan' dar, honey, in de sunshine, en lef me see how you look. I's thinkin' how yo' ma look w'en yo' pa ride off dat mawnin', en she lookin' down de road—lookin' like dat po' bird w'en de hawk ketch hits mate. But he wuz er man wuth lookin' arfter, chile, yo' pa wuz den, en he is now. De ain' none sech—de Temples is fine peoples—but yo' pa—de do say w'en he wuz made de broke de mould so de could 'n have no mo' sech. Maybe dat's why you wuz er gal, honey. No, I ain' seed no mo' sech, 'sep'n yo' gran'pa. De's dyin' out, de ole peoples, en de ain' no mo' ter teck de place, en I ain' sho de's er place fer 'em.)

“Dat Henshaw man he comed back en he say he gwine in de ahmy too, en he jines er comp'ny, but de say he so skeered dat de had ter gin 'im er place whar de gins out de feed ter de hosses—he 'feard ter go ter de front. En one dark night w'at you s'pose he done? He ride off en jine de Yankees. 'T wuz jes' like dat man, he so mean. En de did 'n nobody sot eyes on 'im tell de winter arfter. Den he come back, en de tribulations comed fer sho'.

“But 'fo' dis comin' back yo' pa he comes en goes onct er twict en hit sutt'nly wuz er comfort ter see 'im ef 't wuz only fer er day, en he

so bright en cheerful ter yo' ma en de res'. En he lef' yo' ma lookin' like one er dem warm days in de early spring, so sunshiny en glad ter see 'im. He say de mout have er big fight en he mout be in it, er he mout be scoutin' 'roun'—sometimes de sont de comp'ny off on dat sort o' wuck—but he come back all right o' co'se, en den he mout be de cunnel, 'kase he say de gwine meck de cunnel er gen'l. He tells lots er things 'bout de ahmy en de quar things de Yankees do. He say de could 'n talk to 'em w'en de teck 'em pris'ners, 'kase de doan' orn'erstan' our speech. So he tells he wife good-bye, en kiss her so many times I think he gits ti'ed, en tells her she mus' keep her sperrits up, 'kase he see she love 'im so, do w'at fer he doan' know. Den he ride off.

“Dis wuz in de summer, en de warn' no Yankees 'roun' so fur's we hearn tell, en ev'ythin' wuz so peaceful en quiet, dat is, so we thought. But w'at you think? De wuz Yankees 'roun', yaas, en wus' den Yankees—right down by de bridge—fer dat Henshaw man wuz wi' 'em en he sot er trap fer yo' pa, en teck 'im pris'ner, en he jes' lef' he wife! 'T wuz ole crazy Car'line, she comed runnin' up ter de house, tellin' de news, but she so crazy did 'n nobody lis'n ter her; but 't wuz so. De come en tell de miss's, en den o' co'se yo' ma boun' ter hayar; en mun, 't wuz pitiful ter see her. Dat po'

lamb, weepin' en wailin' all on 'count o' dat houn' dawg Henshaw. 'T wuz er pity yo' pa had 'n drowned him clean out en out dat day in de run. But so 't wuz, en de say de cayar yo' pa off jes' he wuz like er runaway nigger, wi' he han's tied 'hine 'im, en dat lowlike thief, Henshaw, settin' on de hoss, grinnin' at 'im, en 't wuz yo' pa's hoss, too.

"Dat wuz de 'ginnin' o' de tribulations, en de wuz mo' comin', fer w'en de Lawd sont troubles on de chill'ns o' Israel he sont plenty o' 'em so de won' fergit hit. But our troubles warn' sont fer dat, fer you know, honey, yo' ma she did 'n need no troubles ter meck her good—not she. But de troubles comed—hit mout er been de debb'l sont 'em, en he en dat man Henshaw pardners I 'specks.

"She wuz mighty low down, w'at wi' her troubles en teckin' her husban' pris'ner like dat, en mo' things besides. She say dat she do think ef he had been teckin so in er fight she mout 'n min' hit so. But ter set er trap fer 'im like he er varmint! hit hu'ted her so!

"So de days come en go, en de winter comin'. De miss's git wud f'm yo' pa dat he well—de letter comed all de way 'roun' by Baltimo' so she say, whar she had er cousin w'at writ ter 'im en de git de news dat way—'t wuz er scout passin' dat fotch hit. En he say he hopes ter git de exchangement soon. En den de wuz mo'

troubles. Yo' ma she ain' lookin' so ve'y well en yo' gran'ma tryin' ter comfort her, en tell her all 'bout Gen'l Lee, how he done druv de Yankees back; but she ain' cheerful like she uster be, en she say she have bad dreams. But her gran'ma tells her she mus' 'n think 'bout dat—dat peoples in her fix de apt ter have dreams, en she mus' cheer up en be brave. But she say how she gwine do dat wi' her po' man 'way yander in de prison, en she doan' know but w'at he mout be sick er daid, en nobody ter wait on 'im. No wonder de po' chile so low down, en she in dat fix too!

"I wuz puttin' her to baid one night—you know I treats her jes' like she wuz er baby—but she say she cayarnt sleep. She res'less en tumble all 'bout on de baid, en den she calls me en say: 'Peggy, does you love Dan?' (You know, honey, dat me 'n Dan gits married 'bout de same time ez yo' ma, but he mos' torment de life out'n me, he so orndiffuent en triflin'. But he sticks by we-alls ter de las', en dat wuz de 'deemin' o' 'im I 'specks). So I tells her I doan' know so much 'bout dat. Dan's mon's triflin' en wuthless, but I s'pose I hafter put up wi' 'im. Den she say she do love her husban' so! Oh, ef she could teck his place en suffer his sufferin's en bayar w'at he bayar! Yaas, teck his place even if 't wuz in de grave, so he 'scape. 'T wuz beautiful ter hayar her ez she

talk 'bout her love she do have fer 'im, en she say w'en she lay down at night en shet her eyes she see 'im 'way off yander, mebbe cole en hongry er sick, she feel like she die. Oh, she wish she could die jes' ter save 'im. But she tryin' ter put her trus' in de good Lawd; en den I hayar her sayin' sorf' ter herse'f like: 'De Lawd is his shep'erd, he shall not want'—you see, honey, she puts him fus' all de time, knowin' de true wuds wuz 'De Lawd is *my* shep'erd.' Honey, ef you ever gits married, doan' you love no man like dat, fer hit hu'ts—wus' 'n any body pain you kin have. So I says, jes' ter comfort her you know: 'Hit mout be dat de cap'n he not so bad off, en he mout be teckin' he comfort, en who know but he gits out some way, en not bein' able ter git back he git 'im er sweetheart 'way off up yander 'mongst dem Yankees. I's hayrd o' men doin' sech ways.' But she stop me quick, en tell me no! he wuz her own, en ez fer gwine off wi' some oder woman—doan' you tell me no sech thing—she 'shamed o' me fer sayin' hit. So arfter dat she drapt off ter sleep, en I sot by de baid, fer I ain' sho' I best go ter baid en she so po'ly, en so I sot dar tell I hayar de chickens crowin' fer day.

"I looks out en 't wuz day sho' 'nuff, so I goes ter de do' en I hayars er noige outside, en ef dar warn' er whole lot er Yankees, en dat man Bill Henshaw wuz wi' 'em!

“Den I know de tribulations done come fer sho’, fer ef de debb’l ain’ sont dat man hayar I doan’ know, en ’t wuz de debb’l’s wuck he arfter doin’. He seed me en calls me, axin’ is de fo’ks in de house. I says yaas, but de ain’ up yit. He say I better roust ’em up quick, fer de gwine ter bu’n de house down. I say what? He say, bu’n down de house. ‘Well,’ I says, ‘de Lawd sake! I know you bad man, but w’en you git like dis I know you sol’ yo’self ter de debb’l sho’. He got he mark on you now—er black mark.’ But he say he doan’ want no jaw f’m me, he mean w’at he say—de gwine bu’n down de house en drive out de rats. Den I ax ’im who he callin’ rats? en he say we-alls, en hit’s lucky ef de doan’ git scotched too. But I arnswer ’im back en say: ‘Looker hayar man, you done et at dis table en slep’ onder de cover o’ dese baid’s, en you know de treat you better ’n you deserves, en why you warn’ treat de marster en de miss’s en Miss Sophie so—de nuver hu’tted you.’ But he say, ‘Shet up yo’ nigger-mouf.’ I say, I ain’ gwine shet up, no—not fer de likes er ’im, fer I gittin’ riled den, en so I goes on en tells ’im jes’ w’at he is—er low-down, mean, houn’ dawg, en ef he wuz er sho’ ’nuff dawg he’d stick he tail ’twixt he laigs en sneak off, dat he would. En one er dem Yankee so’gers say: ‘Seems like she ’quainted wi’ you, Henshaw.’ En den I bus’

out ergin en tells 'em yaas, I knows 'im—knows 'im f'm de start, en he got no claim on we-alls—he meck 'tend he kinfo'ks, en now he come hayar—hayar whar he live de bes' part o' he life, en want ter bu'n down de house w'at sheltered 'im w'en he wuz er brat o' er boy, en tu'n out in de winter de bes' frien's he ever did have—peoples so much better 'n 'im dat de would 'n wipe de foots on 'im.

“Chile I wuz dat mad I doan' know w'at I say mos', en doan' you know he pull out er pistil en pint hit at me, en I say, 'You shoot who? You dassent shoot!' But he did do, en one o' dem Yankee so'gers knock he han' up en de bullit went up in de trees.

“I hayar one o' dem mens say ter 'nudder one he warn' gwine ter have nuttin' ter do wi' sech doin's. He did 'n jine de ahmy ter fight wim-mens en chill'ns en ole peoples—he leave dat ter de runagates, en w'en er man leave he own country en kinfo'ks ter fight 'g'inst 'em he mighty low down. But while he wuz talkin' I see dat Henshaw man 'terminated ter do he wust, fer he go git er bunch er hay in he han' ter meck de fier.

“Jes' den I see de marster en de miss's at de do', he stan'in' so dignerfied en stern, en de miss's look like she 'way 'bove dem sort o' peoples, en jes' 'hine 'em, pale ez def', en look-in' like she fall down 'mos', wuz yo' ma.

“De marster he ain’ say er wud, he jes’ look at dat Henshaw man—look at ’im like he look th’ugh ’im ’mos’, en w’en he cayarnt stan’ dat look no mo’ he slink ’roun’ de house en de fus’ thing I know de back poach wuz in er light blaze. He done sot fier ter de house he slep’ in w’en he wuz er chile!

“Well, mun, dat warn’ de wust. He come back en he say he gwine ’rest yo’ gran’pa en cayar ’im off er pris’ner. He ax one o’ dem Yankee so’gers ter he’p ’im, but de man say he warn’ doin’ dat sort o’ fightin’, he mus’ do hit he se’f. En doan’ you know he tuck er strop en tie yo’ po’ gran’pa’s han’s ’hine he back, en put ’im on er hoss, en de all ride off cayarin’ dat po’ ole man off like he done kill somebody.

“De miss’s, she ’n Miss Sophie de stan’in’ dar—de ain’ sayin’ nuttin’—de got no wuds ter say, en nudder is I, fer dat beat me, en I dumb den, ’sep’n I say de een o’ things come now, sho’.

“But I ain’ got no time ter think, ner wuds ter spar’, fer ez I look ’roun’ I see yo’ ma ’bout fallin’ en yo’ gran’ma tryin’ ter hole her up. She look so pitiful, all white en trim’lin’, en she moan like one o’ dem doves you hayar down in de medder. (Lis’n chile, you kin hayar one o’ ’em now, moanin’.) Jes’ like dat she moan, en her ma ’n me teck her up en cayar her in de quarter whar de niggers live, en dar she lay

wi' de house bu'nin' down ter ashes, tell de warn' nuttin' but de chimbleys lef', jes' like you see 'em now ef you go dat way.

"All dat day yo' ma lay like she harf daid, but 'twuds evenin' she comed ter herse'f en she calls her ma en me en ax is de gone. But she doan' seem ter rouse up good someway, but she roll her po' haid f'm side ter side en jes' moan. De miss's sot by her en watch, en sometimes she meck her teck er swaller er sperrits out'n er spoon, but she doan' rouse up good tell night, en she ax me ergin is de gone. So I tells her yaas, en good riddens ter 'em too; en ez fer dat man Henshaw I do hope dat hoss 'll frow 'im en breck he cussed naick. But she say no, Peggy, de Lawd, he de 'venger, we mus' trus' 'im—hit's all in he han's. Den I say I wish 't wuz in my han's en he would 'n trouble nobody no mo'. But she say hesh, Peggy, en den lay quiet.

"Now hit gittin' dark en I light de can'le. Yo' gran'ma settin' by de baid weepin'. How she gwine he'p hit? Mr. John Temple, he teckin' pris'ner, de ole marster tecken off by dat man Henshaw, de home bu'n down, en she, po' chile! layin' dar on my baid, in de nigger's quarter! 'T wuz pitiful, sho', en ter dis day I doan' see how de good Lawd 'lowed hit, 'sep'n hit 't wuz 'pinted.

"Pres'n'ly she calls me ergin—yo' gran'ma

gone out do's—'Peggy, is you dar?' 'Hayar I is,' I say, 'right by you.' She say, 'Peggy, I feels so weak en trimbly, somehow I feels like I cayarnt stan' hit. Peggy, ef I should die in dis trouble I wan' you ter 'member jes' w'at I says.' I say, 'Yaas 'm.' ''T is my wud ter my dear, dear husban'. John woan' die—he too good er man ter die—leastways up dar in dat pris'n, en w'en he come back—he comin' sho'—Peggy, you mus' tell 'im fer me dat my fus' thought en my lars' thought wuz fer my darlin' husban'. I prays fer 'im day en night, en I love 'im so I'd be so glad ter teck his place en lef 'im go free.'

"Den she dose er leetle while like she sleepin', en rouse up 'gin en ax me han' her leetle baby (dat wuz you, honey), so she kin see you. En I lays you in her arms en she looks at you so fond, en den all of er sudden she calls out loud—

" 'John ! John ! he on de way home—I feels 'im comin' !'

"En den she faint clean erway. I teck you up en lay you on de baid, en honey, you wuz rale good en drapt right off ter sleep, jes' like you 'd been nussin'. Yo' ma she lay dat way fer long time en den she calls her ma en tell her she know John wuz comin'—she could feel 'im somewhar near her—mebbe clost by.

"Dat skeered me, hit soun' so strange, I 'feard she gwine out'n her mine. But she lay

mighty quiet en tells her ma she feels 'im on de way somewhar—she say she done felt dat way 'fo' w'en he comin'—he on de way ter see her 'n her chile, en mebbe she woan' die tell he git hayar. But she say ter me—somehow she always tells me de love-wuds—'Peggy, I do love 'im so I think ef I wuz daid en laid out en he come en kiss me like he done w'en he went erway, I 'd wake up at de touch o' dem lips en de soun' o' dat voice—wake up en come ter life ergin.

"She look so ti'ed now her ma say she mus' 'n talk no mo', but I hayar her sayin' onder her bref—'he comin', my own sweet'—'t wuz some song-wuds she uster sing ter 'im w'en de wuz co'tin'.

"De miss's she laid down on de oder side de baid, en I settin' dar noddin' en thinkin', en bimeby I wakes up en I looks at her, en I calls de miss's: 'Quick, 'm ! fer Gawd's sake, look !' Dar she lay, daid !

"Marster John Temple he tecken pris'ner, de ole marster he cayard off by dat man Henshaw, de ole house bu'n down, dat po' baby layin' on de baid, jes' borned, en yo' ma layin' dar daid ! Sho'ly de Lawd he done fersake us now.

"I calls Dan—de po' miss's she broke up so she 'mos' daid herse'f, en de wuz nobody but Dan on de place, 'sep'n ole crazy Car'line, en she so crazy she no 'count—so I boun' do sum-

fin'. I calls Dan en say he got do sumfin'. He sech er lazy, wuf less nigger, but dis time he do right well, en I 'mos' fergive 'im he laz'ness en I tells 'im he mus' do sumfin'. He ax me w'at? I tells 'im I doan' know, but he mus' do hit right erway. You see, chile, I wus jes' wared out, en 'mos' 'stracted myse'f. So I tells Dan he mus' do—I doan' know w'at, but he mus' do hit right erway, sho'. He mus' git at hit now. He say, all right, but w'en I ax 'im w'at he gwine do he say he dunno, but he reckens he 'll go down ter de ole wharf by de creek en mebbe he see somebody dat would tell 'im sumfin'. Well, I say, I doan' know, I ain' got no sense lef', so go 'long en do w'at you gwine do, quick.

"I comed back in de quarter en I studyin'. Somehow I cayarnt teck hit in dat yo' ma daid—hit ain' so sho'—de 's some mistake somehow, do ef de Lawd mecks mistakes how de res' gwine jedge. I speaks ter de miss's, yo' gran'ma, but she so wared out she hardly hayar w'at I say. She jes' sot dar en moan. Den I 'members I hayar somebody say dat ef people wuz daid you could tell by hol'in' er lookin' glars 'fo' de face, en I try dat, en sho' 'nuff de wuz jes' de leetles' bref on de glars. Den I 'members 'nudder thing—I hayar 'em say ef er body wuz daid, er cole er fier would 'n blister de skin. Well, hit hu't me mightily ter bu'n yo'

ma's arm, but I did dat—I tecks er live cole in my fingers, en mun, hit 't wuz er hot one—en I lays hit on her po' white arm. Den I waits. Sho' 'nuff de wuz er blister, en I calls her ma en tells her, but she seem like she stunted like by de 'flections—she hardly teck hit in. She sutt'nly wuz low down, en no wonder.

“Well, so pars de night en de day breakin' en yo' ma layin' dar still. She looks awful white, but somehow she doan' look jes' like peoples I seed w'at wuz daid, en ez de sun rise en tetch her cheek I think I see jes' de leetles' bit o' red dar, but I ain' sho.' I wared out myse'f en 'bout ready ter gin hit all up. En den I think who's gwine teck cayar de baby? Den I so ti'ed I drap off ter sleep, en w'en I wake I hayars Dan 'n yo' pa.”

DAN'S STORY.

“Dat Peggy, she sutt'nly is onreasonable nigger. Hayar she done sont me out she doan' know whar, en she doan' know fer w'at, en how in de name o' de Lawd I gwine git he'p, en she doan' even say w'at sort o' he'p she want. Well, I say, I gwine down ter de creek, en mebbe I see somebody dar kin tell me sumfin'. Well, suh, I s'pose hit warn' mo' 'n er mile er so down de road, w'en I see er man comin' over de hill. I say, dar now, dar's somebody now kin tell me. I 'specks dat de

right man now. I ke'p on 'twuds 'im en w'en I gits closter hit seems like I see dat man 'fo', but I cayarnt rightly place 'im. He all raggetty en got er long beard en hayar en he look like er furriner. En w'en I gits clost up, who you s'pose hit 't wuz? 'T wuz Marster John Temple come back—he done got de exchange-ment en come back—too late! He tells me 'bout de exchangement o' de pris'ners en how de brings 'im back ez fer ez City P'int, en he walk de res' o' de way. O' co'se he ax me right off how de all is. Now I is in er fix, I say ter myse'f, fer how I gwine tell 'im all dat happen. So I say, 'Dat man Henshaw been back.' 'Well,' he say. 'En he taken de ole marster pris'ner,' I say. 'Well,' he say, en he grit he teef like bitin' sumfin'. 'En de bu'n down de ole house.' 'Well,' he say, en he grip my arm like I doin' de bu'nin'. 'En de 's er leetle gal-baby,' I say. W'en he hayar dat he lef go my arm en look like he feel sort o' good, en he ax me right off how 's de mother o' de chile. I tells 'im de all mighty bad off, she mighty low down, she so skeered by dat man, en de teekin' off de ole marster, en de dre'fful cayarin's on. I 'feard tell 'im no mo', 'kase ef I tell 'im 'bout he wife bein' daid 't w'd kill 'im too, so I jes' say I ain' seed much o' de fo'ks, de white fo'ks wuz in de quarter en de warn' much room, en I stays 'bout de stable

mos' de time. I jes' lef' dat part ter prov'dence, 'kase ef prov'dence tell 'im some way, er Peggy tells 'im—jes' so he fin's hit out widout me. I doan' want no 'sponsibility like dat. Dat fer de Lawd.

"Well, suh, he step out like he runnin' er race. I think he teck two yards at er stride. I had ter run ter keep up, en den I lef' behime. He gits ter de place en he gin one look at de chimbleys en de ashes—he jes' tu'n he haid widout stoppin'—en he comes ter de quarter do'. Peggy, she see 'im en she say, 'Dar, now, too late, too late !'

"De ole miss's she comed out, en she 'mos' fall down, but he ketch her en she sort o' whisper in he year, en he tu'n so white en trimble so I 'feard he fall down hisse'f, en I ketch 'im by de arm. He ain' sayin' nuttin' 't all dis time but jes' Gawd! Gawd! Dat wuz all. Peggy she step up 'n tell 'im he mus' 'n cayar on so, en she tryin' tell 'im w'at she doin' 'sperimentin' ter see ef she daid, but he look like he did 'n hayar.

"Pres'n'ly he say: 'Lef me see her!' He voice soun' like hit 'way off somewhar, down he thote, Peggy all de time tryin' tell 'im how she thought 't wuz er trance er sumfin', but he doan' hayar, so he goes inter de quarter, en dar he wife layin' on de baid, she en her leetle baby—'t wuz you, chile.

“Mun, 't wuz er pity ter see dat po' man. He look like I doan' know w'at—I cayarnt tell you w'at. He shakin' like he got er chill, en he moan so awful. But pres'n'ly I see he stoop over en I see he han's all trim'lin' en he mouf wuckin', en he kiss her on de mouf.

“I thought she wuz daid, de miss's thought she wuz daid, her po' husban' thought she wuz daid—only Peggy she hol' out ter dis day dat she know 't wuz er trance 'r some sech.

“She open her eyes, dat woman, en I so skeered I feel like I see er ghost—she retch out her han's en she say:

“ ‘John ! John ! I knowed he wuz comin'—did 'n I tell you so, Peggy ? Did 'n I say dat ef I wuz laid out daid en my dear husban' wuz ter come en kiss me I 'd wake up ? ’ En she look like er angel layin dar.

“I gits out o' de quarter en doan' know de res', en Peggy she woan' tell me much, only 't wuz bes' ter leave de white fo'ks ter dese'ves.

“En doan' you know, suh, 't warn' mo' 'n two days 'fo' some Yankees ride up ter de quarter en ef de ole marster warn' wi' 'em !—de done fotch 'im back. En 't wuz good ter hayar 'im tell how de done w'en de got ter de camp. He say de cunnel ax dat Henshaw man w'at all dis means ? En he tells 'im. En de cunnel say ter 'im: ‘You say I sont you out ter bu'n down houses en tu'n out ole wimmen en sick

fo'ks out in de cole?' (You see some o' dem Yankees rid on erhead en tells de cunnel.) En he say he doan' want no sech trash 'roun' he quarter, en he better teck hisse'f off, less 'n hit mout be wusser fer 'im. Dat w'at he say. En he say ter de men: 'Teck dat po' ole man en cayar 'im back ter he peoples, en gin 'im sumfin' ter eat too.' Yaas, suh, he did dat, so de ole marster say. En he say de warn' many o' dem ole fo'ks lef' en 't wuz er pity, fer he knowed 'em en wuz kin ter some o' 'em, en de wuz good peoples, de ole Ferginians, ef de wuz on de wrong side. Dat's w'at de ole marster say de cunnel say, en he say mo' 'n dat—he notice w'en de ole Ferginians fall f'm de ole faith de ain' much good. He ain' gwine trus' 'em no mo'.

"So dat's all, en me 'n Peggy wuck fer our fo'ks—wuck hard, en Marster John Temple go back in de ahmy, en hayar de all is, on he pa's ole plantation, en you de baby guerl Peggy 'n me 's tellin' 'bout."

THE OLD CHOIR-MASTER.

THE old Choir-Master was late that night. He was returning from the city, tired out with his journey, and it was after dark on this particular Saturday night. He walked briskly along the village streets, under the shade of the maples—shade so thick that it made the road quite dark; and, passing through the hamlet, now quiet and still, he was just in front of the old church, at the gate, when he paused for a moment, looking down the long walk leading from the gate to the church door. The gate was now locked and bolted, but through it he had seen many gay weddings pass, yes, and sad funerals too; and as he peeped in through the iron bars which shut in the city of the dead—gates through which those passing in their coffins never return, they now sleeping the final slumber of the just as he hoped until the resurrection, he thought of many things. In the dim light he saw the gray tombstones, the moss-covered walls of the old church, the graves, some of them of his own kin, and as he stood there thinking of the music he was to play on the old organ to-morrow, he heard a voice—a girl's voice it seemed to him, a strangely sweet voice——

"Can you tell me where the old church is?"

Turning, the old Choir-Master saw standing in the shadow a boy and a girl, he thought the girl might be sixteen, the boy younger. She spoke in a strangely sweet tone, and somehow there was that in the tone which thrilled on his ear like some music heard long ago and all but forgotten—heard now as only the shadow of a memory—what was it and who?

"This is the old church just before you," replied the old Choir-Master. "We are standing before the gate and the building in the gloom yonder is the old, old church."

"I thank you, sir, so much. I was afraid I would not find it, and it is my last chance to see it. And this is really the old church! May I ask you, sir, if there is a way by which I may get closer to it?"

"Yes," the old Choir-Master said, "the gate is locked, but there is a broken place in the hedge—this way," and he stepped in the direction indicated, leading the pair through the gap in the hedge, and, stepping over graves, some with tombstones to mark them, some without, some sunken down, and a few newly made—they stood close under the massive walls.

"I am so glad we met you, sir, and so dearly glad to put my hand on these venerable walls. It is very old I suppose, sir?"

"Very old," replied the old Choir-Master.

And he told them when it was builded, and of the tradition that the bricks in the walls were brought on ship-board from England, and of the old Colonial days when the gentry for miles around came with their wives and fair daughters to worship, and of how George Washington was a vestryman of the parish, and of an old lady, very old indeed, who long since died, who had sat on the knee of the General, and had seen his carriage with six horses and outriders drive to the church door in the days of long ago. He told also of the Reverend Bryan Fairfax, the first rector of the church, himself a grandson of the Lord Fairfax who fought, first under the first King Charles, and then under Cromwell. All this and much more he told, standing under the dark walls, and in the deep shade of the great tulip-tree that overshadowed them.

"I love to put my hands on its dear old walls," said the girl, "and, sir, do you think we could get inside the building? I should so love to see the interior."

A thing the old Choir-Master said was very easy. "I will go to my house and get the key and a lantern and let you in. That is my house just yonder under the trees on the hill—you can see the lights in the window."

"Yes," so exclaimed the girl, "I see; and I remember the light that old Mr. Peggotty used

to set in the window for poor little Emily—she who returned no more to the old boat-house; the light reminds me of that.”

And almost while she was speaking the old Choir-Master had gone and returned, not finding the key, he said, but bringing the lantern, and—this to the boy:

“Climb up on the ledge here, put your hand inside the broken pane of glass. You will feel the window-catch: so you can open the window, and when inside open the door.”

Up climbed the boy and in a twinkling was inside, but before he had time to do the rest of his mission up scrambled the girl as well, as nimbly as a kitten, and creeping through the open sash, stood within, a very fair picture indeed, and one that made even the heart of the old Choir-Master beat a little faster. She was a blue-eyed girl, fair of face, with all the sweetness of an opening bud, a beauteous vision of girlhood when girlhood is at its best and sweetest, with cheeks red from the exercise, and eyes and mouth laughing.

Deep eyes they were, laughing at the corners, deeper in the middle, and down deeper still the girl-soul seemed to peep out as if astonished at the world she saw. Soulful eyes, a fair, sweet picture framed in the window, a picture such as eyes never grow too old to feast on or fail of adoration so long as sight endures.

So, not to be outdone by youth and beauty, the old Choir-Master himself made shift to scramble up the wall and through the window, and all three stood inside.

Then the girl turned toward the chancel and walked, reverently so it seemed to the old Choir-Master, to the rail, and for a moment seemed absorbed in thought, then knelt softly down as if in silent prayer, while the old Choir-Master and the boy stood looking wonderingly on. Then she arose, and turning toward them, spoke:

“And this is the place ! this is the hallowed spot where my dear father and mother were married; here were spoken the words, ‘till death do us part.’ ”

And then she told a most strange and curious story of how her father was a student of theology at the Theological Seminary not far away, and of how in the days before the civil war he, with others of the students came to the old church to read the service, and of how he met and wooed her mother, and of the impending war, making all things troubled and in doubt; told of the simple wedding in the old church, even while the first guns were booming that announced the invasion of the State of Virginia; told of his leaving his bride at the church-door, he going into the army, with a regiment of troops from his native State of South Caro-

lina and she back to her home, they seeing each other no more until the war ended; told of the four years of suspense and anguish, while she waited and watched and prayed for his return, and how finally he did come and took her away to his Carolina home, "where," said the girl, "I was born.

"He would come back, my mother was sure, if his life was spared, and such was her simple faith that she made ready what she could in way of preparation, like the Virgins in the Bible story, not knowing when the bridegroom would come, but always ready to meet him. He had a little church in his native State, and I, who am travelling on a strange errand—I may not tell you just what—passing near by, felt that I could not let the chance pass of seeing what you have given me the pleasure of seeing to-night. I thank you so much, sir, and will you not give me your name that I may always remember your kindness?"

He gave her the name, and she now looked bewildered as if that name was associated with something she had heard, but she said nothing of that then.

"We have, as a matter of course, always associated our name with that of Virginians," she went on, "and I do think, sir, from all I have known that you have among you the noblest types of manhood and the most beau-

tiful examples of womanhood to be found on earth. I delight to think that my dear mother was born in your grand old State, and that it is thus far my heritage also."

Now it came back to the old Choir-Master—the voice and the face. He knew now—ah! how well he knew. He could tell; but not yet, not just yet! The boy meantime had wandered off into the churchyard outside.

"My mother," the girl resumed, "has told me much concerning these old times, days so troublous and strange to us peaceful folk; and do you know, sir, that I have a sort of regret that I was born too late, and that if I could have lived in those old days of schooling in the more heroic virtues I should have been the better for it. I take it that only such training can make men and women such as then lived. Nor can I tell you how much I admire your grand heroes—Lee, Jackson, Stuart and others. It seems to me that it is the vice of our time that we have no men save those who are striving after material wealth. But I am sure you tire of my prattle, kind sir, talking of things of which I have only heard."

"Tell me more—more," said the old Choir-Master.

"I have not much to tell, sir, only that my mother's history, like so many others, had in it a strain of tragedy. During the war this

part of the State was a vast camp of Union soldiers. They inevitably came in contact with the residents here, and many of them, at least the officers, made the acquaintance of my mother's family. She had a sister, wilful, imperious, handsome, with the most captivating manners, and to her a colonel of one of the enemy's regiments made advances. The family made enquiries as to this man and ascertained that he had a wife in a distant Western city. We told her this but she laughed in our faces, being as I have said wilful and headstrong; and I fear without much else of sentiment, save a sort of ambition to do daring and doubtful things. I think she must have resembled Beatrice, in that wonderful book of Mr. Thackeray's—Henry Esmond; you have read the strange story no doubt, sir.

"One morning she was missing, and an old servant of the family reported her as having been seen with this colonel; that was all. My mother tells of my grandmother as being crushed, as indeed she might well be; the blow was an awful one and she sank under it, dying of a broken heart. Gone, they knew not where, gone to a fate they knew too well.

"Late in the war there came a letter from her. It bore no date, but had the postmark of a distant Northern city. She wrote only to say that she begged her people to consider her as

dead. She had repented, so she said, repented so bitterly, but it was too late to amend the past and now, fast dying of consumption, she waited the close of a life she would have ended herself long ago but for the fear of a hereafter. That was all, save a humility and lowliness in her tone which gave them to hope that she had indeed a repentance that would not need to be repented of.

"But I dare say I tire you, sir. And you over whose head has passed so many winters—you I am sure know many such stories, full of tragedy and of pathos, had you time to tell me. 'Tis a sad world, sir, but with much of love-lit pleasure in it after all."

The girl made pause, as if waiting for the old man to speak. He seemed strangely affected in some way at her simple narrative, and more than once seemed to suppress a sob. Turning to the organ, he touched a few keys, making random chords of a minor strain, and then said, standing there in the dim lantern's light:

"Child, I knew all this—knew your dear mother and all her troubles and joys too. When I heard the first tones of your voice it affected me strangely, and I must tell you why.

"Do you remember that couplet of Tennyson's:

' 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all ?'

"I was a young man in the days you tell of, and was then, as now, the organist of this old church. Among the worshippers in constant attendance was your dear mother, Emily Mason. She sat just where you are standing—the arrangement of the pews was different then. It would be as impossible for me to forget her, she, with her innocent face and shy, retiring manners, as to forget life itself. She *was* my life, my all. I was a shy, timid youth, devoted to music, knowing little of the world, a dreamer. But as I sat at my seat at the organ from Sabbath to Sabbath, I fear I worshipped Emily Mason instead of the great God whose creatures we are. Not daring to speak my passion, I was silent month after month, until one fateful day—I could never forget that day—your father came to the church to officiate. He had that rich, deep, sympathetic voice I have rarely heard save from that hero of heroes, Robert Lee—he whom we Virginians all worship. It was a voice that only a musician could appreciate. I watched your mother. Her eyes were fixed on the speaker, her color came and went, and she looked as if under a spell.

"In that hour I knew my fate—my hope was as dead as the sleepers in the graves about us—that is, if I had ever dared hope at all. That nameless something which now-a-days they call mental telepathy was established between

the two—in each other's eyes they read each other's hearts, and I knew in that hour that your mother loved your father from that moment.

“There is little else to tell. I played the wedding music, controlling myself I know not how, until the end, then wandering out into the woods flung myself down on the sod in despair—my love alive—my hopes dead !

“That's all my child, and you should not tell this, especially to your mother, for her gentle heart might possibly be pained by the recital of a story she never dreamed of. Not even to my mother or my sister have I ever told this, and it is well that its knowledge rests with you.”

He ceased, and silently the pair—the girl seemingly awe-struck—walked to the door. They stood for a moment under the dim starlight in this summer's night, then, very reverently the old Choir-Master spoke:

“Child, may I pray with you?”

The girl knelt on the green sod—it was a grave's sod—and the old man laid his hands on her head, speaking the beautiful words of the Confirmation Office:

“ ‘Defend, O Lord, this, thy child, with thy heavenly grace; that she may continue thine forever; and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until she come unto thy everlasting kingdom. Amen.’ ”

The girl arose from her knees, turning toward the old Choir-Master, laying one hand on his shoulder she tip-toed and kissed him on the cheek. With a good-bye she went her way into the night and the darkness.

But before she left him she told of her journeyings. She had been North to find, if possible, the grave of the erring sister of the mother, for with those who truly love death does not sunder nor even crime destroy the ties that bind them. She felt, so she said, that could she find the grave of her erring aunt she would mark it as in duty bound, feeling that somehow the dead one might rest more quietly if the spirit could know that the living remembered it in pity and forgiveness. Her quest was in vain, but she knew her mother would feel better for the attempt. It was this errand that brought her to Virginia.

And the old Choir-Master went his way to his home, his heart filled with mingled emotions. When sleep came to him he dreamed that the blue eyes of Emily Mason's child were watching over him—an angel guard in his slumbers, and he dreamed that he was thankful and comforted.

So passed the summer days, and the leaves fell and the flowers faded, the season of Christmas-tide was near, and the old Choir-Master was sick. On the morning of the joyful day

he sat in his chair by the window, listening to the carols of the children as they sang in the church, and a silent tear stole down his cheek. He wanted once more to be with them, but it might not be so. And when the children of his sister came from church, there was a present for him—a Christmas-gift—it came through the mail. It was that most charming of all Mr. Thomas Nelson Page's stories, "The Old Gentleman of the Black Stock," and inside the book was a card with the name of Emily Mason written on it, and on the reverse side the words:

"A Christmas greeting from the girl who saw the old church with you in the summer days."

And the old Choir-Master spent the day dreaming over the book and of his old-time love, and, was comforted.

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